







"HELLO, PUMPKIN MAN," WAS BILLY'S CORDIAL GREETING.

Montgomery, Frances Trego.

BILLY WHISKERS AT THE FAIR

By
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CHAPTER I

THE AUTOMOBILE ARRIVES



FFAIRS at Cloverleaf Farm had been running very smoothly for a month or more. School had begun, the boys were occupied with studies and so well out of mischief's way for five hours each day. Summer crops had been harvested, the barn was bursting with the sweet-scented hay, the well-filled silo promised many a juicy meal for the farmyard inhabitants during the approaching winter months, and in the fields the pumpkins lay like huge nuggets of pure gold, with the shocks of corn standing guard over their richness.

Billy Whiskers, as you will remember, had returned from his long travels with the Circus, the troupe of monkeys had come and gone, and the Farm was left in comparative quiet.

Yet under the outward calm there was a vague uneasiness, and a strange restlessness was apparent among the boys, which at times infected even the older members of the Treat household. All this was proven conclusively because Billy Whiskers and his gaily-painted cart were neglected, and catalogs had held much more interest than outdoor sports for the last week or more.

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But such a condition of things could not last very long. One fine afternoon when the sun was casting long, slanting rays across the fields, and there was the soft haziness of first October days in the air, Tom, Dick and Harry were passing the Corners on their way home from school when the post-



master, a genial old fellow, hailed them from his seat on a cracker barrel in front of the store.

"Here, boys, wait a minute. There's a postal for your father, and the new automobile is a-comin', all right, all right!"

"Hooray!" shouted Tom, as he leaped up the steps.

"Hur-rah!" exulted Harry, a close second.

"Hur-rah!" echoed Dick, as he was dragged along, for the smallest of the Treat boys tugged at Harry's

hand, determined to be on the scene with his older brothers.

Three pairs of eager hands reached through the narrow little window of the board partition which served to divide the post-office

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from the general store, but agile Tom secured the coveted prize and was away, out of the store and off up the dusty road like a flash.

"Father, father, look here!" breathlessly shouted the trio, as they turned into the yard and drew up at the front porch steps.

Father and Mother Treat hurried to the veranda to learn the cause of all this wild commotion, and their faces wreathed in smiles at the welcome news that the auto was on its way.

"When do you think it'll get here?"

"Will you let me drive her?"

"I may, mayn't I, papa?"

The beleaguered father shook off the eager questioners with:

"Now, boys, the card says that the machinist who is to deliver the automobile will probably arrive to-morrow afternoon. I think we'll have to make it a holiday, so you will be on hand when it comes."

"Now, father," remonstrated Mrs. Treat quickly, "that is unwise. They'd much better be in school."

"Tut, tut, mother! Boys must have some good times, I think."

"Oh, father, do let us!" petitioned the boys, and a cheery nod satisfied them that the victory was theirs.

Very little indeed was accomplished by the Treat boys the next morning, and kind Miss Clinton, their teacher, was at a loss for

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an explanation of the wriggling, twisting and manifest uneasiness possessing them.

Tom was detected in the act of attempting to communicate with Harry, the note was confiscated by Miss Clinton, and Tom himself straightway sent to the platform, where he whiled away the dreary, lagging moments by driving an imaginary automobile

over the hills at a terrific speed, much to the envy of his school-mates.

"I'll ask everyone of 'em to ride, except Miss Clinton," he pondered, planning revenge for his present predicament.

"And *then* I guess she'll wish she hadn't punished me."

Noon came at last, as all noons do, and then the note was presented to Miss Clinton by little Dick, though by this time it was very much the worse for frequent fingering. The little fellow had not been able to keep his hands off the precious thing for longer than five minutes at a time. First he had to make sure that it really was in his pocket. Then again he took just one peep inside



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to reassure himself that it asked that he and his brothers be excused from the afternoon session. Each time he took it out, he patted it lovingly, and therefore it now bore many a print of chubby and very smudgy finger tips.

Miss Clinton's consent was readily given, for rules in the country districts are not so iron-clad as in the more crowded city schools, and away hastened the boys for the noonday meal at home.

It proved to be rather a tempestuous one, and Mrs. Treat was glad indeed when chairs were pushed back from the board and the restive group betook themselves to the wide, shady veranda. It commanded a splendid view of the road toward Springfield, for it mounted a gradual ascent of a mile or more before it scurried over and down again in its eagerness to reach the city.

"I wonder what Billy will do when he sees the machine," piped up little Dick, as they settled themselves comfortably in hammock and in spacious, comfortable porch chairs.

"Well, he has seen plenty of autos go by here, and after all his experiences with the Circus this summer, he ought to behave, I'm sure," said Mrs. Treat uneasily, for she was never quite sure that she understood Billy and all his varying moods.

Now Billy overheard this remark, for he was just around the corner of the house, on the outside cellar door, this being his favorite spot on warm afternoons.

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In fact, he was very fond of luxury, and always took a siesta after a hearty meal and during the heated portion of the day.

"Don't be too sure of that, Mrs. Treat," soliloquized mischievous Billy. "I am not so old yet that I shall rest content without occasional adventures. I really believe I am beginning to be a trifle bored, now that I think of it. Nothing interesting has happened in this countryside for a whole month, and it is high time that I stir up the community a bit. It really seems too ba—"

"He's coming! He's coming!" shouted Tom. "Just over the hill! Don't you see him?"

And the three boys, unable to control their delight, pranced around, threw their caps high into the air, and then raced down to the gate.

"Look at her go! Bet she can make thirty miles an hour," predicted Harry.

"She is surely plowing through the sand in great style," said Tom, as the automobile reached the flats and struck the heavy sand of the bottoms.

"I'm a-goin' to sit on the front seat," announced Dick confidently, hanging over the gate and swinging back and forth.

"Oh, no, you're not, sonny! I am, you know," declared patronizing Harry, but Tom, the deliberate, silenced them both.

"You'll neither of you sit on the front seat. Babies belong back

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in the tonneau with their mother, and that's just where you'll be, youngsters. Father and I will sit in front, you'll see."

"Huh!" grunted Harry, with fine contempt. "Think because you're an inch taller'n me you own the farm, don't you?"

They were still arguing this all-important question when with toot of horn and a fine flourish the automobile drew up at the gate, and the chauffeur bent over the wheel to inquire:

"This Cloverleaf Farm?"

"Well, I just guess, and that is our automobile!" was the satisfactory, if rather inelegant response.

"Glad to see you, very glad to see you!" was Mr. Treat's cordial welcome as he hastened to shake hands with the driver.

"Glad to meet you too, sir, and to deliver the car safe and sound. She's in finest trim. Suppose we might as well proceed right to business. I must get back to Springfield to-night to catch the eight-forty westbound. Shall I teach you to drive her now?"

"Well, to-morrow is Fair day, and we'll want to use her, of course. But come in, and have a drink of sweet cider and a doughnut first. You must be thirsty," urged Mr. Treat, not forgetful of hospitality. "Boys, run and tell mother to put on her bonnet and to come out for a little spin."

During this time Billy Whiskers had not been idle. He had observed the approach of the car, and leisurely ambled around to

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the front of the farmhouse, nibbling grass and occasionally taking a sample of Mrs. Treat's special pride, a gaudy bed of scarlet geraniums bordered with sweet elyssum.

At last he took up his station on the front steps, in order to view the automobile to best possible advantage. With one long look, he said to himself:

"That is a mighty fine contraption. Glad I was able to earn it for the boys. 'Twas well worth a summer of toil, hardship and privation to give my Dick a bit of pleasure. What fine times we'll have in it! But why, w-h-y, how is this?" questioned surprised Billy from the porch steps, for Mrs. Treat had needed no second bidding to take her first ride in the automobile, and had brushed past him, unheeding.

In fact, she had laid her hat on the bed of the spare room downstairs early that morning, all ready to be donned for this very occasion, and even now the family was being stowed away in the rear seat of the auto, doors were being securely fastened, last cautions and warnings given, and the driver was cranking the machine preparatory to starting.

"Why, w-h-y," repeated Billy in astonishment, "They've forgotten *me*. I'll just remind them," and he ran down to the gate, bleating his displeasure.

"Good-bye, old Billy!"

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"Race along behind! There's a good fellow!" Harry called.

And with these words of scant consolation, the machine glided off, leaving Billy a very much disconcerted and crestfallen goat.

Then jealousy crept into his heart, and filled it near to bursting.

"They surely remember that it is my automobile. I am the one who really earned it, I'd have them to know! I am the one who should have had the honor of the very first ride. It is my money they are spending, and yet here I stand, alone and forsaken, while they go whizzing off in such fine style!"

Now as everyone knows, boys and girls especially, jealousy is a very naughty thing to cherish, and revenge is even worse, but, his anger mounting higher and higher, Billy proceeded to plan vengeance.

"I don't like the smell of the thing, anyhow, and if they don't let me ride in it, perhaps my horns can take some of the shine off its sides. I'll bite a piece out of the tires, too, and then maybe they'll have time to remember a little of what Billy Whiskers has done for this family. I might even drink the gasoline, but you see that might explode after it's inside of me and not prove altogether a safe undertaking," and he sadly returned to the cellar door for his usual afternoon nap.

The Treats did not return for two hours or more, and then all

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were so loud in their praises of the automobile that poor Billy was quite forgotten.

A bountiful supper was spread, and the machinist entertained in true country style. After the meal, all repaired to the porch for a final chat before the driver should be taken to Springfield by Mr. Treat.

"I'll remind them of my existence," thought Billy, and he stalked slowly across the front lawn with majestic tread, in full view of the group, on his way to the barn and his quarters for the night.

"What a very fine goat you have there," complimented the chauffeur.

"Oh, yes," agreed Mr. Treat, "but a great nuisance, I sometimes think."

"Why," interrupted Mrs. Treat, "what do you think? A few weeks ago he came back home with a whole pack of trained monkeys he had led in a Circus performance this last summer, and glad enough I was when we were finally rid of them. He's a scapegoat, I'm sure of that."

"A goat is all right, but an auto is lots better," decided unloyal Tom. "I wish we could sell him now."

"You do, eh?" thought Billy, as he disappeared around the house. "If I ever have a chance at some of the people who are

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always so ready to discard their old friends, they will wish I had never come back from the Circus with enough money to buy their automobile," and as a balm for his wounded vanity, Billy wandered down to the barn to spread discontent and rebellion among his animal friends.

"Well, Brownny," he began, as he entered that faithful horse's box stall, "the new auto has come, and all the farmyard animals will have to look to their laurels now. They may even be entirely forgotten and perhaps left to starve." You can see from this remark that Billy was possessed of a remarkably vivid imagination.— "I've gone supperless to-night, which may be but the beginning of the new order of things."

"Now, Billy Whiskers, that is sheer nonsense. Why, I've been with the Treats ever since they were bride and groom, and I have carried each of the boys around on my back as soon as they were able to hold on to my mane. They'll never forget the services of old Brownny." And he proudly tossed his noble head.

"Oh, don't be too sure of that," returned Billy. "Just remember what I did for them this summer. And now Mrs. Treat is calling me a nuisance and a scapegoat, whatever that is. This minute they are planning long trips, but never a word of thanks to Billy."

Brownny gave a hoarse laugh of mingled contempt and ridicule.

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“Why, William Whiskers,” he said in a tone of sharp rebuke, “you are carrying on like a half-grown kid instead of a full-grown, bewhiskered goat!”

“Never mind, we’ll see how you behave when your time to be cast aside comes. You’ll not even get to the Fair this year.”

“You’re wrong there, Billy. I’ll go the same as I have for the past fifteen years. Be up bright and early to-morrow morning and you’ll see me on the way.”

“Perhaps, and again perhaps not.”

“Well, at any rate I’m not worrying. Why, this morning you saw our farmyard beauty, the Duke of Windham, along with Dick’s Plymouth Rock, Toppy, as they started for the exhibit. They’ll be prize winners, or I miss my guess. The Treat farm is always well represented. By the way, Billy, are you going? Lots of fun—such fun as you’ve never seen. Better come along,” cordially.

“Oh, I’ll be there. But be sure you are among those present, that is all,” retorted the goat, with a knowing wink.

“Going to walk, same as you did to get to the Circus?” prodded droll Brownny.

“Not if I know it,” was Billy’s quick reply. Ambling up closer, he reached up and whispered confidentially:

“I’m going in the automobile, with the rest of the family. A goat of my experience and breeding goes with the best,” and with



WHACK! RESOUNDED A BROOMSTICK ON BILLY'S BROAD BACK.

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that Billy stalked off, head held high, well satisfied at having filled Brownie as full of uncomfortable forebodings as he himself had been a short time before.

"I surely smell doughnuts," thought Billy as he sniffed the keen outside air, and he quickened his steps toward the kitchen, which had been the scene of unusual activity that day.

Peering cautiously in, he found the field clear, much to his satisfaction.

"Deserted! I'll now eat the supper I didn't have a while ago."

And into the pantry walked the naughty Billy, to pilfer the results of Mrs. Treat's day spent at baking and brewing.

"Dear me! there surely are doughnuts somewhere about. I never make a mistake in that regard, for they are prime favorites with one B. W. Ah, there they are, and a two-gallon crock piled high with the brown beauties! I'll try just one, and then that pumpkin pie on the next shelf looks a bit toothsome, too. I really think that all these doughnuts, six pies all in a row, a chocolate cake, and then another that they call a sponge, though I never could see the reason for the name, besides three fried chickens in that earthen bowl are just a little more than the boys ought to be allowed to eat to-morrow. It might make them sick, and so I'll play the good fairy and remove temptation from their path," and Billy fell to with a will.

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His stomach was commencing to bulge with the goodies, and even his goatish appetite was half satisfied, when Whack! Whack! resounded a broomstick on Billy's broad back, wielded vigorously by the mistress of the household. Discouraged and back beaten, his goatship scurried to the barn, there to nurse his many grievous wrongs.

"Small use in my trying to do right," he cogitated. "Somebody is always against me, and as soon as I am up, they are sure to knock me down. I am getting sore," and he rubbed his poor back against Brownny's stall. "Anyway, there's a good time ahead to-morrow."

Now Billy had heard a great deal of this annual county event, for the Treat boys had discussed it at length. Nevertheless, it would all be new to him. As he sought his bed of fragrant hay, his thoughts ran:

"Wonder what a Fair is like. Maybe just a miniature Circus, and then it will be a bore to me. But I'll go in the auto. That will be a new experience, anyway. Will sit on the front seat, too; if not going to the Fair, at least on the return trip. There will be room for me somewhere. I have always managed my own affairs with a fair measure of success, and I believe I can this time. They say where there's a will there's a way, and I am the Will in this instance. With a good night's rest and an early breakfast, I will be in trim and—and—" but Billy was off to the land of dreams.

CHAPTER II

FAIR DAY DAWNS



AS IS the invariable custom with all thrifty farm folk, the Treat family was astir as soon as the sun had begun his journey across the sky. Just as the first bright streaks of light shot up from the horizon in the east, Mr. Treat went to the stock barns to do his morning chores, and his good wife was busy in her kitchen preparing the morning meal. The boys were eager to lend a hand—an extraordinary state of affairs, to say the least, but they were so brimming full of excitement at the prospects of the day before them that finally they were banished from the kitchen, their mother declaring them nuisances and far more of a hindrance than a help.

As the sound of the clicking gate leading from the barnyard to the vegetable garden at the rear of the house proclaimed Mr. Treat's return, his wife poured out the steaming, fragrant coffee and Tom was summoned to carry the savory ham and eggs to the table. Mrs. Treat was one of those women who realize that a farmer must dilly-dally at his meals no more than any business man, and seldom indeed was this family asked to wait for a meal.

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"Looks like a fine day ahead of us," Mr. Treat reported as he opened the door. "The little fog in the valley is clearing fast, and by noon it will be warm enough for our picnic dinner in the maple grove."

"Evening red and morning gray
Sets the traveler on his way,"

quoted Mrs. Treat. "I was not worrying about the weather, for that sign never fails."

"Goody! Goody!" exulted Dick. "Let's hurry, father."

"Well, all the stock has been fed, and my work is done. If mother will pack the lunch, we'll be off within the hour. I've taken a look at the automobile and everything is in shape for the start."

"I'd much rather go in the carriage, with Brownny," remonstrated Mrs. Treat nervously. "You know, father—"

"Oh, father, please don't!" chorussed Tom and Harry in a breath.

"I'll drive Brownny!" cried cheery little Dick, always ready to acquiesce to any plan.

"Now, mother," wheedled Mr. Treat, "don't you worry! That machinist told me a lot of things about the auto, and you know I drove to Springfield and back again last night after supper. I made the return trip alone, too, and so nothing's going to happen to-day. Boys," dismissing the subject, "help pack the hamper, and I'll fill the gasoline tank."

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Boys and girls who have lived all their years in the city have scant idea of all the good things that went into the Treat hamper that morning.

There was a crisp salad of celery, apples, nuts and lettuce, dozens and dozens of sandwiches with a liberal filling of boiled ham, pickles—tomato pickles, cucumber pickles, pickled pears, pickled onions—cold chicken, sliced ham, baked beans, mince pie, pumpkin pie, doughnuts, and a delicious cake.

The preparation of the lunch was Mrs. Treat's special pride, and all her housewifely art was exerted to make it the best her ovens could produce. As she spread the snowy napkins over the top of the bountiful feast, she said:

"This lunch basket is rather large, but it will set in that hamper on the auto very easily. I've packed this basket tight, and the things won't jiggle at all. Now, Tom, you take hold of this side, and Harry, you may take this, and tell your father to crowd in newspapers securely about it so it can't move an inch. I always think when I see an auto go spinning by that the trunk'll surely bump off when they go over the thank-e-ma'ams on the hill."

"Mama said to fix it tight," cautioned Tom, as the basket was lifted to its place in the larger hamper on the rack.

"I'll do that, my son, and now run in and bring me some more papers. This lunch must carry safely, or our day will be spoiled."

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"There!" sighed Mr. Treat, as he tested the hamper to see that no amount of bumping would disturb the lunch, "that will do, but I will let the lid be open, for mother'll be sure to want to tuck in something else at the very last moment. Come along, boys, we'll get our hats and then be off," and they merrily trooped into the house.

Jealous Billy had not been idle all this time. Indeed, he had been spying out the situation from a favorite hiding-place in the hay mow, and now he descended to reconnoiter further.

"How am I ever to get to the Fair in that? There's no place underneath where I can hang on. I can't get inside, for they'll see me first thing, and then I'll be taken into the barn and securely locked up. That was the treatment I received in the summer when the Circus came to Springfield. I can't ride anywhere that I can see."

Once more he circled around the machine.

"If there was only a top to the machine, I might manage to ride on it. To be sure, it might prove rather slippery, but I'd dig in my toes. There would be one disadvantage, though. I'd receive the full benefit of all the bumps on the road, perched up there."

With a saucy side toss of his magnificent head, he paused suddenly to chuckle:

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“Ha, ha! Ho, ho! Just the very place for me! Ha, ha, ha!” and with one light spring he was up beside the hamper.

“Plenty of room with a few of those papers out of the way,” so he proceeded to dispense with them by eating them—not a very appetizing meal, but goats are not the most epicurean of beasts. When they had been disposed of in this manner, he stepped daintily inside the hamper, though it was a very tight fit. Then his eyes popped open and a broad smile lighted up his countenance, and he wiggled his chin whiskers, a trick he had to express extreme pleasure.

“What luck for Billy! Breakfast all laid! And Mrs. Treat’s best cooking, too.”

With a little flirt of his horns, wicked Billy brought the cover down over himself and the lunch basket, and to all outward appearances everything was very snug.

“Good thing this is so large,” ruminated Billy. “Really it is more of a rattan trunk than a hamper. I suppose it is meant to do duty for a trunk on short trips,” and he settled himself comfortably, and only just in time, for Mr. Treat was even then calling in his hearty, jovial way: “All aboard!” and was helping Mrs. Treat into the tonneau.

After an argument as to whom belonged the honor place—the seat beside the driver—Tom was installed there, while the

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younger boys were tucked in beside their mother, pacified by the promise that on the return trip it would be turn-about.

In the excitement of getting off, Mr. Treat forgot all about the unfastened hamper, and so with a few preliminary coughs and rumbles, the machine glided smoothly out of the drive on to the highway—a *six*-passenger car.

* * * * *

From the time the boys had been out of bed, they had been popping to the front window in the kitchen at every noise made by passing vehicles.

“Mama, mama, there go the Ripleys!” they complained, eager to be off.

“We’ll never get there if we don’t start pretty soon,” they fairly groaned.

“Never mind, never mind,” Mother Treat comforted. “We are going in the automobile, you know, and we will overtake all those people before they are so very many miles on their way.”

And now that they were skimming along so rapidly, they really began to pass their neighbors in their slower, horse-drawn conveyances.

Farmer Treat honked merrily as he rolled up behind them and as horses were turned to one side to give liberal passing room, the

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boys answered the friendly greetings with happy shouts and waving caps.

"We will beat the whole township to the Fair," predicted Tom, ever full of confidence.

"B-b-b-b-u-u-u-r-r-r-r-r!" came a hoarse, grating sound from the depths of the auto as they reached the first slight incline which began the long, steady half-mile mount of Rex Hill.

Mr. Treat, full of fear at the unusual noise, put on the emergency brake and brought the car to a standstill with a sudden jolt.

"Mercy me!" shouted Mrs. Treat, from the tonneau. "Let me out! I told you something would happen and we'd all be killed. Let me out!" she repeated, fumbling frantically at the door.

"What's the matter?" inquired the boys, as they began to tinker with spark plug, brake and lever.

"Let those be!" commanded Mr. Treat, not in the best of humor, and trying in vain to conceal his uneasiness. "I'll soon have it fixed," and he continued his search for the cause of the trouble.

"It isn't the tires as I can see, and nothing's wrong with the sparker, either," he said nervously. "And there comes the George Petersons, and he'll have a spell if he sees me in difficulty. He is always glad to laugh at one in trouble. Besides, I know he's wanted an auto for a long time, and a chance to laugh at—Mother,

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come on! Climb in. It's all right. I must have fed the engine too much gasoline. Climb in and we'll be hustling along."

All went well until they topped the hill and struck a new cinder road when b-b-bu-ur-r-r-r! came the same dismal, warning sound.

"Land sakes! Whatever can be the trouble now? I am getting that fidgety that I sha'n't be able to enjoy anything at the Fair when we do get there!" fretted Mrs. Treat.

"I'm pretty certain it is the gear," said her husband, "or else the carbureter."

"Perhaps it is the spark plug," offered knowing Tom.

"Mightn't it be the batteries," suggested Dick with a wise expression in his great blue eyes, and a frown on his face.

"Or may be one of the differentials," added Harry, eager to be of help to his father.

"Well, I am pretty sure it is a judgment on us," responded Mrs. Treat. "I think we had better turn back and get old Brownie and the surrey. We'll be sure to get there some time then. Now I don't know that we ever shall."

"What did I do?" questioned Mr. Treat as the engine began to respond to his vigorous cranking. "I've cranked and cranked and *cranked*, and why it should begin now and not ten minutes ago is beyond my comprehension."

If the driver had been of an inquiring turn of mind and had con-

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ducted his investigations a little further, he might have located the real cause of all his difficulties.

In the course of the last half hour, Billy Whiskers had been feasting himself upon the pies and cakes and other delicacies stored in the hamper.

"My, what would Brownny think if he could see me now!" he thought. And it was his roar of delight that resulted in the first consternation of the inexperienced chauffeur.

"Deary me!" thought the goat when the auto brought up with a violent jerk. "I wish Mr. Treat would be more careful. I'll surely be caught now, and he will be the death of me if he finds me in here," and a nervous shiver or two ran down his spine. But when all quieted down and the machine was making good time over the country roads, Billy resumed his repast, only to be interrupted once or twice by his chuckles of bubbling good nature.

At last, even his appetite being fully satisfied, he began to lay further plans for his outing.

"In the first place," he mused, "how am I ever to get out of this box? My legs are cramped, and I ache in every bone from remaining so long in such an awkward position. I'll stretch a bit and see where we are, at the same time," and he cautiously raised the hamper lid with his head.

"Well, well! If there isn't the gate to the grounds. How glad

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I am to see it. I'll crouch down here and ride right in with the family."

But the flowers on Mrs. Treat's hat proved his undoing, for they waved so temptingly near, Billy could not resist one little nibble



to see if they were as delicious as they looked. Feeling the twitch as his teeth fastened upon them, that lady

turned suddenly, and Billy, making a hurried effort to escape her eye, dodged down behind. Unfortunately, he lost his balance and fell into the dust, and it was only due to the fact that the hamper was strapped on securely that he did not carry that along. He rolled over and over in the deep dust of the unpaved roadway until his beautiful

white coat was soiled and grimy.

Regaining his footing with a bound, he shook himself to free his coat of the dirt and to express his disgust.

"'Twill never do to let a trifle like this keep me from the Fair.

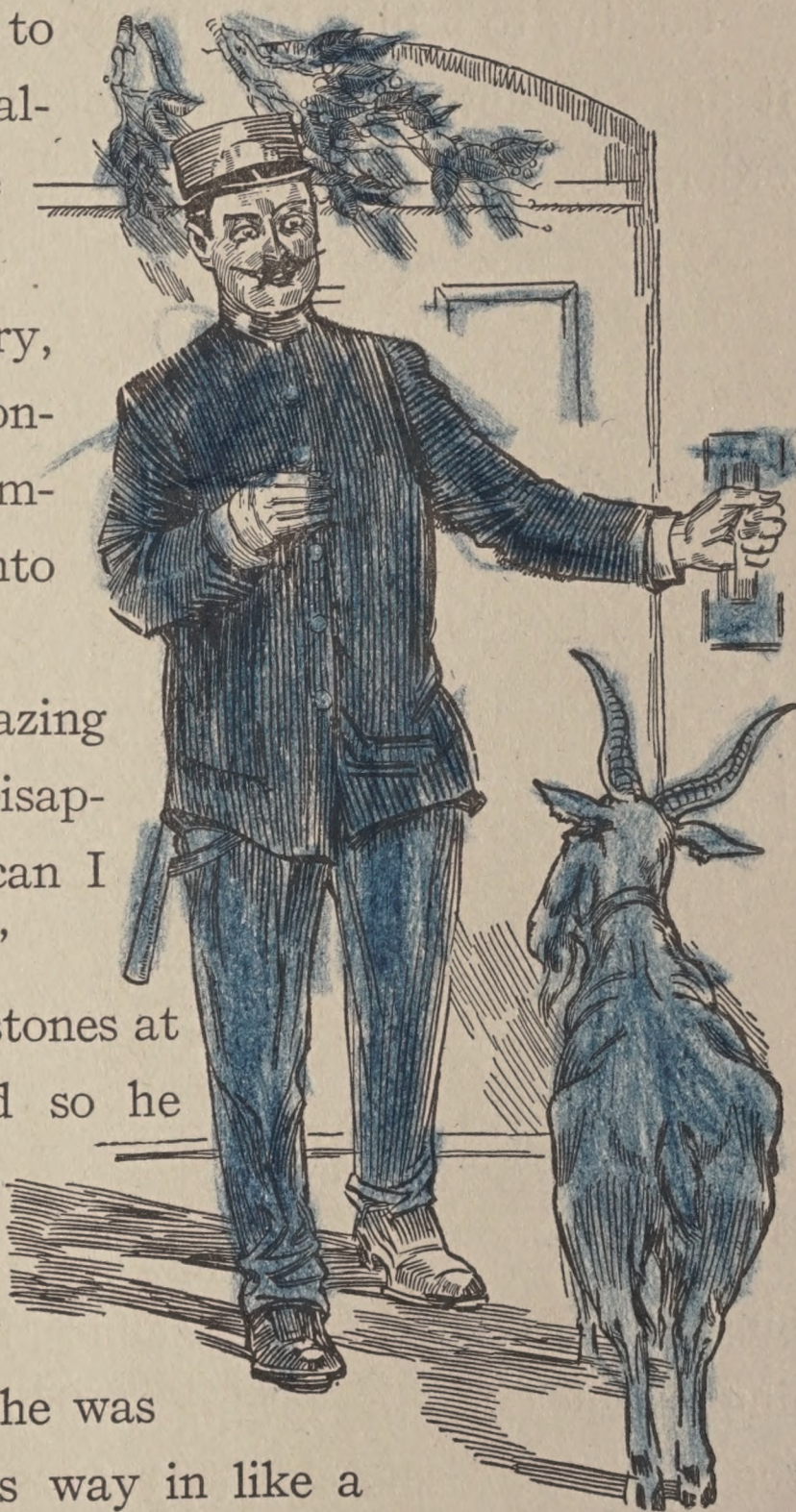
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I must gain an entrance somehow," and he ran as fast as his fleet legs could carry him.

He made a desperate effort to overtake the automobile, now almost at the gate, but just as the machine rolled past the entrance and into the enchanted territory, Billy dashed up, only to be confronted by the gateman, who nimbly swung the wide gate back into place—and Billy was outside!

"Beaten!" he gasped, gazing wrathfully after the fast disappearing automobile. "How can I get inside of that high fence?"

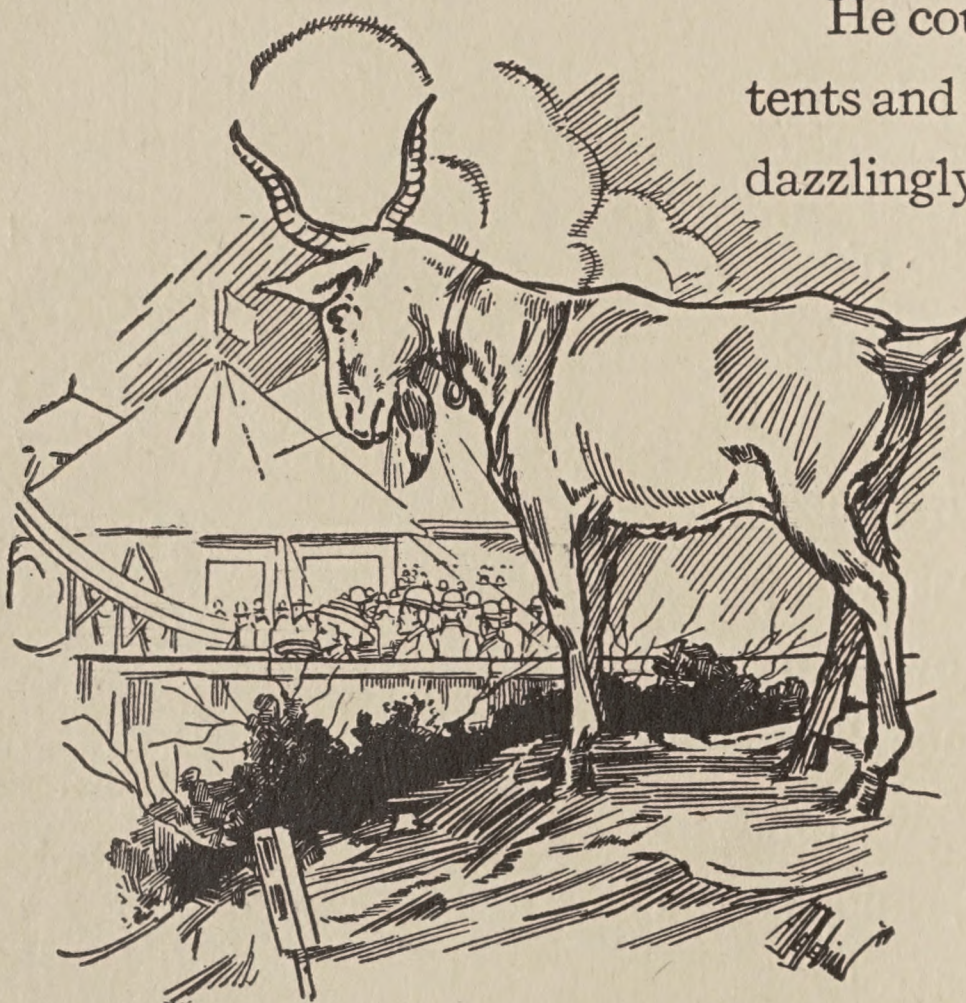
The gateman threw a few stones at Billy to chase him away, and so he sadly and slowly began to patrol the fence, searching for some place that would offer easy entrance. Two or three times he was half way under, squirming his way in like a common dog, but a crowd of boys found him and, taking advan-



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tage of his helpless position, threw sticks and stones, and forced him to withdraw.

Coming to a high bluff that overlooked the grounds, he climbed it and lay down for a few moments of rest, to rearrange his disordered plans.



He could see the tops of the many tents and the roof of the grand stand, dazzlingly white in its new coat of paint, and the long, curving course of the race track stretching before it. All of these things he quickly recognized from the descriptions he had heard the boys give, and then, too, it resembled the Circus to a striking degree.

About the tents and buildings he could see the crowds beginning to surge. He could hear the barking of many dogs, the cackling of chickens, the lowing of the cows, the baaing of the sheep, the squealing of the pigs, and the confused murmur of the people,—a great hubbub down there, but just a faint murmur at this distance.

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“Oh, if only I were there! It must be glorious. See that beautiful horse trotting around the track at the far side—and there, there is our auto, I’m sure of it! I wonder what Mrs. Treat will say when she discovers that something has happened to her fine lunch. But here, I must gain entrance to these grounds by hook or by crook.”

He thought a long time, but one plan after another was cast aside as being too foolhardy, or unworthy his prowess, or beneath his dignity. At last, just below him, he spied little Dick coming along beside his mother.

“Ah, there is my playfellow!” and with no thought but to join him, he bounded over the forbidding fence.

“Oh, Billy, Billy!” shouted surprised Dick. “I’m so glad to see you,” but Billy needed just one quick glance at Mrs. Treat’s face to realize that it was wise for him to keep his distance and away he scurried, free as when on his native hills in far-away Switzerland.

CHAPTER III

IN THE NEEDLEWORK EXHIBIT



AFTER Billy had put a safe distance between himself and Mrs. Treat to feel at ease, he wandered aimlessly along, letting himself be carried here and there, wherever he chanced to see anything that offered interest, when suddenly he heard a squeaky, high-pitched voice saying:

“Oh, where have you been
Billy boy, Billy boy?”

“Who is that? I do not recognize the voice, but it may be some of my old friends from the Circus,” and knowing that the voice issued from a tent near by, he promptly stuck his head under the canvas side and took a look about.

Billy Whiskers, as you already know, had a very large bump of curiosity, and tents were no mystery to him after his long experience of the summer just gone.

“Nothing there,” he quickly decided, when from the other side of the tent came the inquiry in a sing-song, high falsetto:

“Oh, where have you been,
Billy boy, Billy boy?
Oh, where have you been,
Charming Billy?”

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By this time Billy's eyes commenced to bulge with wonder, for he was as susceptible to flattery as any.

"I wonder which of my friends is playing this joke. Come out, old fellow, and give me a fair chance," he demanded.

"Oh, where have you been,

Billy boy, Billy boy?

Oh, where have you been,

Charming Billy?

I've been to seek a wife,

For the pleasure of my life,

She's a young thing,

And cannot leave her mother!"

came the mocking answer.

"If I could find the insolent fellow, I would cure him of prying into other people's affairs. More trouble is made in this world by prying eyes and itching ears than any other one thing. That much I've learned in my short career. But there is nothing here except that box with the tin horn sticking out of the top. It must be someone is trying to play a practical joke on me."

Billy crept all the way into the tent, for he still hoped to find one of his friends in hiding. Walking about cautiously to explore, he had all but reached the mysterious box when once more the voice began to repeat:

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"Oh, where have you been,
Billy boy, Bil——"

"Now I know who 'tis. It's one of those parrots who traveled with the Circus, and that box must be her cage. They always were the sauciest things, and full of importance, and I'll teach her a much-needed lesson."

Backing away to gain a start, Billy made the attack and struck the box full in the center. Over it went with a great clatter, and the noise summoned an attendant, who rushed in to see what had happened.

"Get out o' o' here! You've greatest invention," and, stick in hand, he started after Billy with wrath in his



gain a start, Billy and struck the center. Over it clatter, and the an attendant, to see what had

here! Get out smashed the tion of the in hand, he Billy with eye.

Deciding that discretion was much the better part of valor, Billy took quick refuge in precipitous flight. He crept under the side of the tent once more, but this time his departure was hastened a trifle by a final prod from his pursuer.

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“No use,” thought the discouraged goat. “I receive many rough knocks in this great world. If they had not called me in here, I would never thought of entering, and then the moment I am inside, they boost me out as if I were an intruder, and so it goes—but here I am at this large building. Let me see what it has to offer. I always like to make the rounds to these show places before the crush commences. Besides, this seems to be devoted to the ladies, so it deserves my first attention. Then I am always a wee bit shy and timid when the ladies are around, so altogether it behooves me to get in early.”

In reality, Billy had wandered into the needlework department of the great Fair. The walls were hung with quilts of all colors and makes. There was the common four-patch, the more pretentious nine-patch, and then the intricate, puzzling designs of the tulip pattern, and, above all, some proud owner had brought her wonderful Rising Sun design, with its limitless amount of work.

Large pieces of embroidery likewise were displayed, and show cases were filled with the most expensive and exquisite hand-made laces. Tables were strewn with fine doilies, elaborate handkerchiefs, scarfs and what not.

Billy was plainly amazed, and stood with wide-open eyes gazing about.

“Just look at those handsome pillows and the soft, downy

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cushions! How fine it must be to sleep on them instead of on a hard bundle of straw or perhaps on the hay beside the haystack," and so musing, Billy walked the length of the hall.

People were now beginning to crowd the building, and Billy was scarcely noticed among the throng. Petticoats were much in predominance, as men are little, if ever, deeply interested in such things as were here displayed. Billy rejoiced at this, for he did not hold women in such respect as men—they might shriek louder, but instead of giving chase and inflicting merited punishment, they much more often merely screamed their fright, and then collapsed in a little, limp heap. Therefore his seeming boldness on this occasion.

Once an old lady, dim of sight, patted him on the back, but, bending closer, discovered his horns and drew fearfully away, wondering at her fortunate escape.

As Billy strolled along, he became conscious that he was frightfully hungry, and when he heard a lady exclaim in admiration at a "biscuit quilt," he edged nearer to that center of attraction.

There on the wall he saw what appeared to be a mammoth pan of many colored biscuit. For a long time he gazed at the sight, lost in happy contemplation of the feast that it would afford. The longer he looked, the hungrier he grew, and the wilder became the desire to sink his teeth in the delicious, puffy looking things.

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When most of the crowd had pressed on to another point of interest, he crept up to the toothsome dainty and began to nibble at it.

“Rather tough,” he commented, “but perhaps they’ve baked too hard around the edge and when I get nearer the middle, the biscuits will be more tender. It must have been rather a large pan, and the outer ones had too much heat,” and he ate on with a right good will.

Having consumed all that was within easy reach, he began to pull. With a crash the entire supporting frame fell to the floor, knocking two or three people down and striking Billy a spiteful blow on the head.

Blinded for the moment, and enraged, he plunged madly into a show-case. There the shower of falling, shattered glass terrified him the more, and he turned to make a frantic rush through the rapidly gathering throng, knocking down any and all who blocked his path with those cruel, lowered horns.

Finding progress almost impossible and fearing immediate capture, he leaped up on a table and ran helter-skelter from one end to the other. In his mad careening, his horns caught an exquisite lace shawl, and it went streaming behind him like the tail of a comet as he made one long, flying leap through an open window, to safety, as he thought, but S-P-L-A-S-H! Billy landed in a great



BILLY LANDED IN A GREAT TUB OF WATER.

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tub of water in which seven or eight ducks were calmly besporting themselves.

“Three rings for five cents!

Try your luck!

Seven for ten cents!

Win a duck!”

screamed the fakir.

Hearing the wild hissing and quacking of his prize fowls, he turned to investigate, and just in time to see Billy Whiskers scramble out of the miniature duck pond and vigorously shake himself free of the water of his involuntary and unexpected bath.

“There,” thought Billy, “I’m away from that mob of petticoats, and also from that stringy thing that fastened itself to my horns,” for one duck, more daring than its fellows, had plucked the cobwebby lace off Billy’s horns and was waddling off with the filmy plunder.

More concerned about the safety of his ducks than with the intrusion of the goat, the fakir bustled about restoring them to their tub, and Billy made off, much to the amusement of the ring throwers.

Perhaps you have known people that were so engrossed with their own small troubles that they had no thought for the countless beautiful things in the world about them—never saw the blooming

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flowers, never heard the warble of the feathered songster, never enjoyed any of the countless wondrous things God has put into His world for His children's pleasure?

Well, Billy was not that kind. No sooner had he extricated himself from his predicament of the duck pond than he cocked up his head, shut one eye in a provoking wink, and drank in what was as pleasing to his ears as rare wine to the palate of the epicure — the strains of music from a merry-go-round.

It was just coming to a standstill as Billy approached, and in the attending bustle and excitement of unloading the youngsters, he managed to secrete himself between two prancing, though wooden steeds. In a moment the shrill whistle tooted its warning and last invitation to another group to board, and the children crowded the circular platform. Hurriedly they chose their places, one little fellow crying:

“Oh, let me ride the Billy dote! He is just like the Billy I want at home, favver!”



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And there stood our Billy, rigid as a statue, never wiggling so much as one whisker while the youngster bestrode his back and clutched at his horns.

Round and round and round the merry-makers circled, as dizzy as they were happy. The piano played, the children laughed, and the grown-ups, though scarcely so boisterous, enjoyed the trip fully as much as the little folks whom they accompanied—for of course they had to go along. Wouldn't it be too dreadful if the boys and girls should tumble off their steeds?

Presently the merry-go-round stopped, and as the children poured fourth to make room for the next relay, Billy cautiously watched his opportunity to escape, dizzy and very weak of leg from the rapid circling of the merry-go-round. As he made off, he skulked behind this building and that, fearful that someone who had witnessed the havoc he had created in the fancy-work department might still be on his trail.

CHAPTER IV

THE BABY SHOW



OW, Billy Whiskers, this is much like your experience in the early summer at the Circus, and you know full well what dire consequences followed then," scolded the goat, for one of Billy's favorite pastimes was to talk to himself as though he were two goats, Billy the good reproving Billy the mischief-maker; Billy the first admonishing Billy the second for his escapades and bewailing his abnormal capacity for evil doing.

"It is high time that you decide to keep out of harm's way," he continued with a wag of the head, "for if you don't, someone with a blue coat and a shiny piece of metal on his breast will catch you and then there'll be the end of all fun and the beginning of a most dreary time in captivity."

"Well, well," impatiently agreed the fun-loving goat, "you're in the right, as always, wise William, and we'll reform—for to-day. We'll see all there is to be seen at this Fair in a becoming manner, though I fear me it will be a trifle dull and prosy—like spice cake minus the spice."

All this time he had been ambling slowly along, following the

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

general trend of the crowd down a street lined both sides with booths and buildings which flaunted the gayest of bunting and flags, and now he drew up with a start as he found himself at the end and facing an open door, for he was wary of buildings in view of his recent experience in the needle work department.

Here before him was a great sea of faces. Long rows of chairs and in every one of them a woman with a baby! Babies and babies and babies were there. Some were fat and rosy, well content to sit quietly on their proud mothers' laps, others were lean and agile, and forever on the move, but all were beruffled and belaced in billowing garments of purest white.

"Ah!" ruminated Billy, "this must be the Baby Show. I heard Mrs. Treat talking about it the other day. I'll see what sort of specimens are carrying off the palm these days," and in he sauntered.

"Now I'm sure that if my Dick was a baby again, he'd have first place. Even now he is the roundest, rosiest, merriest little youngster I've ever met—and goodness knows, I'm rather an experienced judge. Didn't I see thousands and *thousands* of boys and girls all last summer? If ever you wish to see all sorts and kinds, the Circus is the place for you. Why, I remember one day—but there, to the business in hand," and he commenced to pace slowly down one aisle.

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"Isn't she the dearest thing?" ejaculated one woman immediately in front of Billy, pausing so suddenly to fondle a baby all done up in blue ribbons and lace that Billy, now on his good behavior, had much ado to save her from an uncomfortable and unpleasant encounter with his horns. With skilful maneuvering, however, he essayed to pass by, but, his curiosity aroused, he peered around to discover the cause of her admiring words.

By this time the baby was undergoing a series of pattings and huggings at the hands of the visitor, while the delighted mother hovered over the two.

"Doesn't she look bright? But then, she ought to be. Now my Jamie, he's only five, and he's the smartest boy," and motherly pride beamed as she launched into the story.

"Jamie is the cutest chap, and can wind his father right round his little finger and lead him where he pleases. Last winter when Washington's birthday came, I thought he was old enough to hear about the Father of his country, so I told him all about the boy George. The next morning I saw him climb up on his father's lap and, opening his big blue eyes in that cunning way all his own, he asked:

" 'Papa, did George Washington really and truly cut down that cherry-tree?' "

" 'Yes, my son, so they say.' "

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“ ‘And didn’t his papa whip him for being so dreadfully naughty?’ ” with a shake of the head to express his wonder.

“ ‘No. You see, Jamie, he was proud to have a son who was brave enough to tell the truth even though he thought a whipping would follow owning up.’ ”

“ ‘Well, papa, would you whip me if I cut down a tree?’ ” came next from our boy.

“ ‘I think not, Jamie. Yes, I’m sure I would not whip you. I would be just every bit as proud of you for telling the honest truth as George Washington’s father was of his boy.’ ”

“ ‘Say, father,’ ” and Jamie snuggled up closer to his father, “ ‘I never told you, but one day last summer I went over to Rob’s house and—and—I ate a whole bushel, almost, of mulberries!’ ” came the hesitating confession.” And the mother glanced around quickly to note the effect of the story on her audience.

“He is a little diplomat, that I see from your story,” commented one of the group of ladies who had gathered about.

“Boys are dears,” offered a little old lady, dressed in quiet gray that matched the silver of her waving hair and brought out the wonderful blue of her beautiful eyes, still alight with youthful fire. “Of course I never had a son, nor a daughter either, for that matter, but years ago I lived next to a little girl named Alice, and then I decided that girls were really nicer than boys.

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"Alice was the brightest child, and it was my delight that she came to my home for a daily call.

"I always kept a jar of cookies in the kitchen cupboard, just in easy reach for her, for Alice was passionately fond of cookies, and especially if they boasted a raisin in the center. She always visited that cupboard as soon as she came in, and always found the jar was waiting for her with its store.

"But one day her mother told me the habit must not be allowed to grow, and so I promised faithfully to do my part.

"It was not long until Alice, her curls bobbing and her eyes dancing with fun, came running in to see me. Straight to that cupboard door she went, and opening it, was about to reach for the sweet cake when she discovered the jar empty—empty for the first time in weeks and months!

"Looking at me out of the corner of her eye, she tapped on the jar and inquired:

" 'Any tookies at home to-day?' "

"And you?" asked one of the bystanders, eager for the rest of the incident.

"Well, I—I didn't keep my promise to help break her of the habit that day."

"That is a good one," seconded another woman eagerly, "and brings to my mind a story of my boys, now grown men. In those

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days we lived on the farm, and my sons were just old enough to venture out into the fields alone. You know what a lark it is for boys to hunt? Well, my boys developed the instinct early. One day in spring George saw a squirrel flirt its saucy tail over in the woods, and off they were after it.



"I had not noticed their absence until I saw Charles, a toddler of four, come racing down the road and turn into the dooryard.

" 'George has broked his neck! Mama, mama, George has broked his neck, he has!' he screamed.

"Tell me how," I demanded, my heart thumping wildly.

" 'He fell off a tree. He's broked his neck. Come quick,' the child gave answer.

"I needed no second bidding, but frantically started for the wood lot. Charles ran along by my side, and when we came to the fence I lifted him over first, and only then thought to ask:

" 'Charles, how do you know his neck is broken?'

" 'Well,' he explained, 'you see, he climbed the tree after the squirrel, and he went out too far, and the old rotten limb it just

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snapped and George fell and he is hurted, and he said to run and tell you to come quick. I started and then he called and said:

“ ‘Charles, better say my neck is broked right off. I guess then she’ll hurry, sure!’ ”

“The little rascal!” laughed one of the bystanders who had listened to the tale. “I don’t believe you hurried so much after that enlightening speech, did you?”

“Well, hardly. You see,” beaming, “I wasn’t so sure that his neck was broken after that!”

“Hump!” thought Billy, disgust written on his face. “These mothers are the queerest things. They tell stories by the full hour of their children as if they had the most wonderful boy or girl in the whole world. And, after all, they prove to be just about the average—nothing so exceedingly bright about any of those stories that I can see,” and off he strolled, for he meant to make his way out of the building without further delay.

He would likely have carried out this determination, but before he had proceeded half way to the door, all his sympathies were aroused by one of the exhibited babies. For whatever other faults Billy possessed, a hard heart was not one of them, and any sign of suffering brought quick sympathy from him.

“Deary, deary me! That child must have the whooping cough! What a crying shame to bring it here. It is black in the face al-

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ready, and there sits its mother doing absolutely nothing for its relief. I'm sure she doesn't know what ails the poor baby!"

Now it happened that the Treat trio had had a long siege of the disease the winter before, and Billy knew very well what to do when a paroxysm of coughing wracked the sufferer. Had he not seen Mrs. Treat, who was usually so gentle a mother, vigorously pound her offspring on their backs? And hadn't the boys come out as hearty as ever?

So Billy resolved to take the same measures in the present case, and thereupon he backed away, gained a start, and gathering momentum with every forward step, he hurled himself pell-mell against the child. Off it went, rolling and tumbling from its mother's lap to the floor, emitting shrill screams, though they were more from fright than from injury.

"There! It's recovered its breath, at any rate, and that is the main thing," was Billy's self-congratulatory thought, but alack



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and alas for the philanthropically inclined goat, punishment swift and sure followed.

Cries of alarm, a general stampede among the onlookers, and an umbrella wielded by a hearty farmer hastened Billy's ignominious flight from the scene.

"Oh, ma li'l darlin', ma honey chile!" crooned the mother over her wailing, rescued daughter, rocking it back and forth to comfort and quiet it, for Billy had attacked a negro baby!

CHAPTER V

THE BALLOON MAN



Y the time Billy had made good his escape from the Baby Show, the grounds were crowded with merry-makers. The annual county Fair was an event that no farmer and but very few of the townspeople of Licking County would willingly miss, and the genial sunshine had brought thousands of sightseers out on the first day, for such ideal weather could not be expected to last long at that season of the year.

The country folk, for the most part, provided their own lunches, for noon was the time set apart for social gatherings of old friends and neighbors. Many times five or six families would spread their picnic dinners together and, not having seen each other since the last Fair, the hour would pass pleasantly enough with comparison of rival crops, a discussion of the outlook for another prosperous year, exchange of advice on farming subjects, and kindly gossip about mutual friends.

The townspeople, on the other hand, depended on the numerous lunch booths and tents scattered over the grounds, and now as Billy followed in the wake of the crowds, the odor of coffee coming to him

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in delightful, fragrant whiffs, proclaimed that noon was fast approaching.

“If lunch-time is here, I must be on the lookout for something to eat. Nothing keeps one in better humor or in finer condition to meet the trials of the day than a good meal. I’ve observed that this truth applies to men and women as well as to goats, too, and the fact likely explains why so many, many people are overly fond of table pleasures. But there, stop your philosophizing, Billy, and take hold of the pressing business in hand—the location of the base of supplies.”

An empty stomach quite often proves as great an incentive to action to people as well as to goats, and this may have accounted for the unusual bustle of the sightseers for, try as he would, Billy had much difficulty in wriggling through the crowds and made slow progress.

“I do believe everyone is heading for the Treat automobile, same as me,” he reflected. “I do want to get there early, for it is my one opportunity to secure a meal honorably. If I was at Cloverleaf Farm, I should be provided with plenty and to spare. That I am at the Fair instead is no reason at all why I should be neglected by the Treats.”

You will see from this that Billy meant to do just right, and likely would have put his resolution into effect had it not been that

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at this juncture he spied a great mass of red, yellow, blue and green balls floating in the air near by.

They were such gaudy, attractive things that Billy determined to secure at least one, to take home to Dick as a memento of the day. He pushed on, and soon saw that they were all held in leash by one man, who was now in a heated argument with a little fellow not more than six or seven years old at the most.

"I did give you a quarter!" he was explaining, while the street peddler emphatically shook his head and repeated:

"No, no! But one dime, but one dime you did give to me. No, No! I give you your right change!"

"I want my money, I do!" wailed the boy, the angry tears beginning to stream down his chubby cheeks.

"Those Turks are all browbeaters, and here seems to be one of



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the worst of his tribe," thought Billy. "Poor toddler, to lose his coveted quarter that way! I know how Dick has treasured up his Fair money, and I for one do not propose to stand idly by and see any boy treated so."

With this resolution Billy charged with one mighty butt into the wrangling Oriental. But what was this? Instead of a head-on collision, as Billy had anticipated, with a fleeing, howling victim, it was Billy himself who was in mad flight, with a mysterious something tugging away at his horns, gently but nevertheless persistently pulling straight *up*.

Now that is not the way a man holds a goat. They invariably push *down*, and Billy first grew impatient and then angry because he could not account for this strange feeling.

He broke into a trot, thinking to rid himself of his tormentor, but that only served to attract a crowd of hilarious boys and girls, who ran screaming and screeching behind him.

On he galloped, by this time at full speed, and quite reckless of consequences. Would he never be able to free himself? Louder and louder came the shouts of his pursuers, larger and larger the following until poor Billy, quite bewildered, decided to turn and "face the music" as Tom would express it.

No sooner did he wheel about than there was a wild scattering, and it was only one boy, more venturesome than the rest, who



LOUDER AND LOUDER CAME THE SHOUTS OF HIS PURSUERS.

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braved the threatened danger and marched boldly up to our Billy.

Imagine, if you can, the amazement of the boys and girls to see him pat Billy on the head with impunity, and then capture the huge bunch of toy balloons that had so frightened him with their bobbing about. But their wonder lasted no longer, and they pounced on the rescuer and demanded a share of the plunder. He proved to be a generous lad, and was gladly distributing the gaudy things among the clamoring youngsters when the peddler, with face every bit as red as the scarlet fez which topped it, came upon the scene, panting and puffing.

He threw his arms up in the air, bellowed his wrath, and then descended upon the children to claim his wares. Knowing too well the folly of remaining, they scattered to the four winds, and left the Turk to nurse his anger as best he might.

Billy the brave had not thought it wise to stay for all this, but as soon as he saw victory assured for the children, betook himself off.

"I'm so hungry that my horns rattle, and it is high time that I'm nearing the automobile," thought he, bending his steps toward the green circle inside the race course, where many vehicles were left for the day.

"Most likely Mr. Treat thought that the safest place for the new machine, so I'll look thereabouts first," decided the goat, crossing

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the track and squirming under the fence. "Anyway, it's not so crowded over here, and I can lay down and rest. Goodness knows, what with babies and boys to rescue, I'm somewhat overworked and very weary, and need a nap soon after lunch!"

He was carefully picking his way between carry-alls, buggies and the more pretentious surreys to the farther end of the circle when he spied an automobile close at hand.

"Can't tell whether or not that is ours until I'm near enough to see the hamper. I'm better acquainted with that than with any other part of the automobile," he was musing, but brought up short as he discovered a figure suspiciously resembling that of motherly Mrs. Treat hurrying along a few yards ahead.

"Dear, dear! This will never do! I'll have to make a flank movement and come up to the base of supplies before she does," and with a flirt of his stubby tail, he galloped off in double quick time, taking a roundabout way toward the automobile.

"Now when the attack of the fort is made, I'll capture that hamper by quick assault and retreat with my prize with all possible speed," he planned, but alas! as he was about to make the raid, he found the foe already on the ground.

"Well, they say it's an ill wind that blows no one good," gloated Billy. "Even if I do lose my dinner, I will have the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Treat find out how I came to attend the Fair. Hope

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she lifts the lid—oh, my! see her face! Isn't it lucky for one William Whiskers that he's a safe distance away? Why, how, *what* is she doing?" as she began to scatter neat, tissue-wrapped packages right and left.

"It can't be that she's throwing all that luscious stuff away! I nibbled just a wee bit at it, to be sure, but plenty was left for their dinner. But here is where I lay in my ammunition for my afternoon campaign," and with that he made his way to the automobile, arriving on the scene soon after Mrs. Treat, bubbling over with righteous indignation at her untimely discovery of the pilfered feast, hurried away with her ample, but exceedingly light lunch basket.

As you may happen to know, goats are not as fastidious as might be wished about their food, and what appeared the height of luxury to Billy had been scorned by the mistress of the Treat household as unfit to grace their table. The marks of Billy's depredations were all too plain to be mistaken, and fully half the lunch had been discarded because Billy had poked his inquisitive nose into it.

"My mother taught her kids that extravagance is a sin, and to waste good food like this must be very wicked indeed. If I should leave it here to be tramped under foot, I'd not be able to rest easy for ever and ever so long. My conscience would prick me for not heeding my dear mother's teaching, and that is about the worst punishment that can come to goat or man," pondered Billy, as sand-

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wiches, pickles, doughnuts, olives, and other goodies disappeared as if by magic.

“Now for a drink, and I’m ready for the afternoon. Of course, there’ll be many more people here in the afternoon, just as the evening crowds at the circus were always so much greater than those at the matinee performance. Large crowds make you step lively in order to keep up with the procession, and, fortified by forty winks of sleep, I’ll be equal to anything.”

CHAPTER VI

THE FORTUNE TELLER



AFTER Billy had quenched his thirst at a watering trough roughly hewn out of the trunk of an enormous chestnut tree and filled to brimming with cool, sparkling water piped from a bubbling spring not far off, he felt a longing for a nap, for so strong had the habit of an afternoon snooze become that even with all the hubbub of a county fair about him, with all the gay banterings of the jostling people, with the toots of the horns and the squawks of the squawkers, Billy was undeniably sleepy, and a yawn brought him to the realization of how very much he needed a rest.

“I remember seeing some hay in a barn over near the grandstand, and I will make that serve as my couch,” he was planning when his further progress was checked for a moment by a crowd surrounding a haranguing fakir. Billy was impatient at this delay, and fretted and fumed.

“Some people lose every vestige of good manners the moment they’re one of a crowd,” he grumbled, but a second later and he, too, was guilty of this very thing, and was just as eager to push his way

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

to the front as any of the people whom he had been berating. No thought of sleep now troubled him; no thought of politeness, either, judging by the reckless way he was forging ahead.

What was it that worked this sudden change? Let us accompany Billy as he wriggles and squirms and wriggles again, steadily pushing his way forward, for there in the center of the group is a very queer looking individual.

He is taller than most men, but this may be because his head is swathed in a high turban, the gayly colored cloth being wound around and around his head in soft, voluminous folds, underneath which peers out a typical Oriental face with snapping dark eyes, and teeth gleaming like ivory, while a crafty smile plays about his thin lips.

He carries an enormous pen holder, fully two inches in diameter and eighteen inches long. He has just explained how he is able to do wondrous things with the Magic Pen, as he calls it, and is now screwing it together, having shown the bystanders that it is merely a hollow tube, with nothing concealed in it, yet possessed of wonderful power.

As he distributes sheets of paper and pencils among his listeners, he cries:

“Write your initials plainly. Then the Magic Pen will tell your fortune. It will reveal your past, and it will foretell your future.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

The Magic Pen sees all. The Magic Pen knows all. Sign your initials! Sign, sign, sign!"

As he passes the paper, he catches sight of Billy, and laughingly bestows on him paper and pencil, much to the merriment of the crowd.

"They are mak-

that much I know.

and with that Billy

initials, holding

mouth, and using

the paper on the

sure, they are

a beginner's,

in penmanship,

more highly edu-

kind, would never have

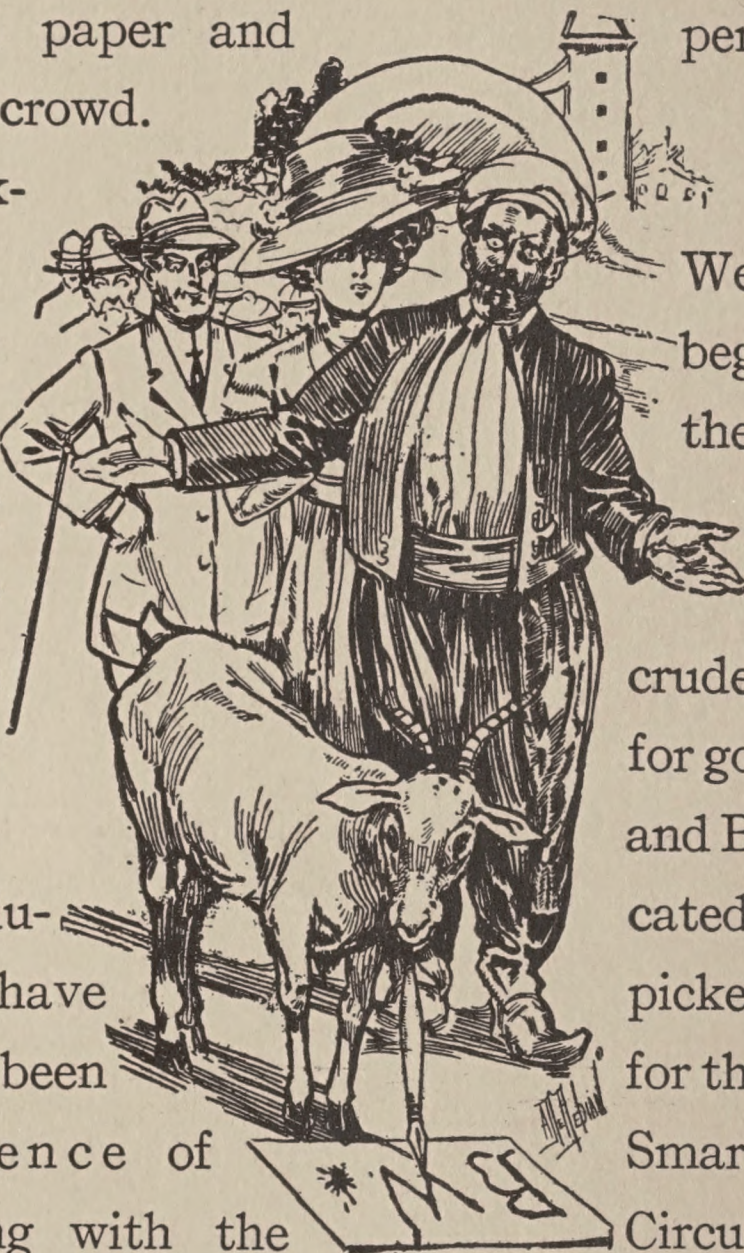
the art had it not been

exhaustible patience of

ed horse traveling with the

voted long hours to teaching Billy, with the result that he is now

able to write the two letters rather creditably.



ing fun of me,

Well, we'll retaliate,"

begins to trace his

the pencil in his

one foot to hold

ground. To be

crude and look like

for goats are not skilled

and Billy, though much

cated than most of his

picked up so much of

for the kindness and in-

Smart Jim, the educat-

Circus. He had de-

It is impossible to describe the surprise pictured on the faces of the onlookers as Billy picks up the lead pencil and, carefully ad-

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

justing it between his teeth, bends over and writes those two significant letters. They go mad with delight, and clamor:

“The goat’s fortune! Tell the goat’s fortune!”

“The Magic Pen is able to do even that,” and the boasting fellow rolls up the paper with a great show of care.

Unscrewing the pen holder, he places the sheet inside the tube, securely fastens it, twirls it in the air, and while repeating this weird incantation:

“Magic Pen, reveal to me
All this creature is to be;
All he is to do, to see,
Oh, Magic Pen, reveal to me.”

he gives it a final toss high into the air, deftly catching it as it falls, and opening it, unfurls the paper.

He first passes it to two or three for close inspection, and then reads aloud:

“B. W. is endowed with altogether extraordinary talents. He has a large amount of curiosity, and often butts into other people’s business.”

“That I do,” chuckles Billy, “though I butt into them quite as much and as often as into their affairs!”

“He was born on the continent.”

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Right again," shouts Billy, though the crowd think he is merely bleating, but we who understand goat language know much better.

"And his future seems in some mysterious way to be connected with China."

"Suppose I'm going to travel again," muses Billy at this information.

"B. W. will rise to a great height in the world, but this may be followed by a fall. Sudden fame is also foretold, and, having been born under a lucky star, he may venture much and gain even more. Thus saith the Magic Pen."

"Now I'll salt that down in my memory's storehouse, and see if the Magic Pen really knows anything. I've always thought people silly who believed in signs and such things, but, come to think of it, I *did* walk under a ladder just before Harry gave me that beating as a punishment because I butted the Duke of Windham around the barnyard a bit for being too obstreperous and presuming too far on our good nature. Perhaps, after all, there is some virtue in signs and fortunes."

"By the way, speaking of the Duke reminds me that he is on these grounds, and I must find him and have a little chat. He will be glad to see some of the home folks, I know."

If ever you have attended a county fair, you know that it is

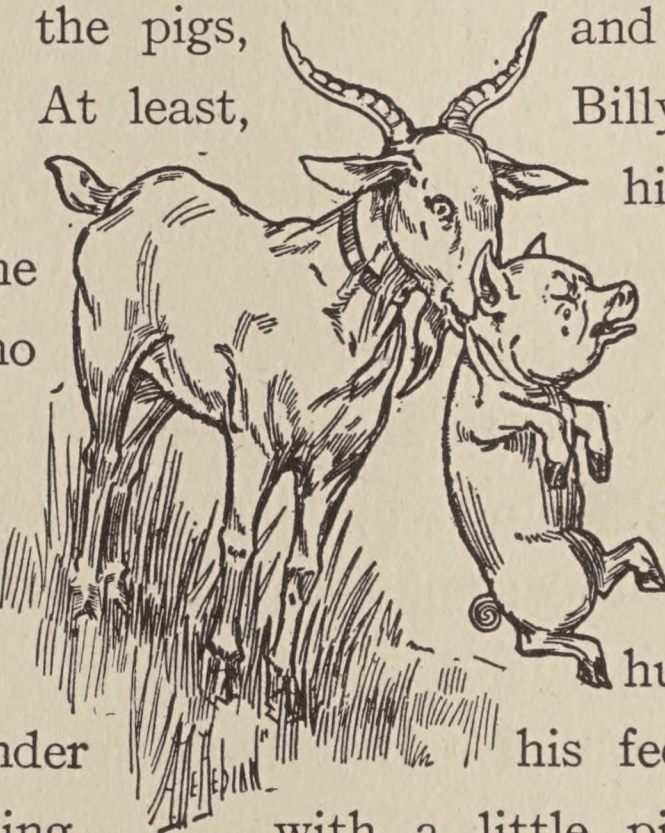
Billy Whiskers at the Fair

very easy to locate the cattle exhibits, for they are invariably in stalls or sheds at one end of the grounds, and what with the cackling of the chickens, squealing of the pigs, and all of the many peculiar and distinctive calls of the farm animals, there is not much chance of losing your way. Billy, of course, walked straight to the stalls, for animals seem to know instinctively how to find one another.

First he came to the pigs, and such piggy looking pigs you never saw. At least, Billy thought them ugly things, for he himself was so immaculate that he scorned other creatures who had no personal pride, and pigs—Ugh! How they do love the mud and the mire!

So Billy now merely tilted his head to one side and hurried on unseeing, until there, right under his feet, was the most cunning, fat little thing, with a little pink, trembly nose.

Plainly it was in sore distress, and in great need of instant care and sympathy. Without one moment's hesitation, Billy conquered his aversion to the pig family, and up he marched, and gently rubbed his nose along piggy's back—his only way of caressing. Billy next inquired the cause of all the trouble, and piggy only grunted his reply, but that was enough for Billy to comprehend,



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

and very tenderly did he lift the fat little roll by the nape of the neck—the only way there seemed to be to hold him—and carried him back to his mother, who also grunted to express her relief at the restoration of her lost baby.

“I’ll not remain to receive my thanks,” thought Billy, as he dropped the little pig over into the pen. “That’s not my way of doing good,” and he was off in further search of the Duke of Windham.

That worthy was proudly pacing his narrow stall when he spied friend Billy approaching.

“Ah, here comes His Highness, Sir Billy. I’ll not let *him* see how I chafe to be out of this box; no, not for a minute would I confess to him how irksome are the hours I have spent here,” and so, when Billy arrived, he was munching hay and looking the acme of contentment.

“Good afternoon, Duke,” began Billy. “I’d not been on these fair grounds ten minutes until I began to look for you. Old friends ought not to forget each other, and I knew you would be glad to see some of your home folks. What a vantage point you chose, away up here on this hill where you can see all over the Fair!” he continued, as he turned to take in the panorama before him. “Indeed, you have a better view of the race course than many have in the grandstand itself,” and with such subtle flattery Billy sought to ingratiate

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

himself with the calf, who at once beamed his delight and most graciously responded:

“Yes, I’ve had a fine day of it. And you see this blue ribbon round my neck? That means that I’m the winner of the first prize,” and the vain Duke began turning and twisting in a useless effort to secure one glimpse of the tag that had caused so many to stop and admire him during the day.

“It’s no surprise to me to see you wearing that, Duke. The Treat boys know far too much to waste their time feeding and currying a beast that is not blue-blooded. And you have been their special pride this season, that I know.”

“Well, it is no secret that Tom is my favorite, and he did give me numberless curryings and rubbings down this summer. My coat is as smooth and glossy as any thoroughbred could wish, and my markings are especially fine, I fancy. That star on my forehead, now, is near perfect, don’t you think?” waiting eagerly for further approbation.

“To let you into a secret,” replied sly Billy, “I’ve made the entire rounds, but there’s nothing here that can hold a candle to your beauty. That’s my candid opinion. You know I’m not one to flatter, and you can depend on my word.”

“Such appreciation of one’s good points deserves some substantial recognition,” thought the Duke, and so he said:

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

“By the way, Billy, are you going to stay over night? If so, I’ll be proud to have you as my guest, for my quarters here are plenty large enough to accommodate you.”

“That is just like your generous self,” replied the goat. “And while I had thought to return to Cloverleaf Farm at nightfall, the prospect of being entertained by you leads me to change my plans. I’ll be more than delighted to accept, and will be back soon after twilight.”

“Yes, that might be best, for the keepers feed us about six o’clock, and if you were found here, they might not like it. However, I shall save my supper until you arrive, and then we will dine together.”

“Agreed! I’ll be off now, and thank you again for your most hospitable offer.”

CHAPTER VII

THE LAUGHING GALLERY



KNOW not what other people think about the matter, but there is nothing in this wide, wide world so useful to me as flattery," meditated Billy after leaving the Duke of Windham. "It will bring quicker returns than anything else, and I fancy that with this weapon I can conquer almost any foe.

"Now the Duke of Windham has not the faintest idea that my call was made for the sole reason that I wanted a comfortable lodging for the night, and that I had planned my visit with care. He is congratulating himself on his bigness of heart this very moment, that I'll wager. Anyway, my object is attained, and now I can enjoy myself with no thought or dread of the night. The time was when I did not think anything of spending a night in the open, but then it is not so much that I'm growing old as it is these disagreeable, rheumatism-breeding fogs that accompany the October nights."

Billy disliked to acknowledge even to himself that old age was creeping on apace, and that it was necessary to have extra care if he would enjoy good health

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Who can explain why all the people are hurrying and scurrying so? They act as crazy as loons, and that is no exaggeration."

Just then a raindrop hit Billy spitefully on the tip of the nose, and others pelted him on the back.

"Ah, ha! So this is the trouble, is it? I've been so deep in thought that I've not cast a glance at the sky, but the outlook is that we will have a little rain storm. Clouds like that great black bank there in the west mean something to me. Ho, ho! And some Fourth of July effects thrown in!" chuckled the goat as a vivid flash of lightning was quickly followed by a reverberating roll of thunder.

"The greatest fun I know is watching a crowd caught in a storm. I'll stroll along and enjoy it to the full extent."

Billy did not realize how impolite it is to make light of another's distress. His mother, I fear, had been negligent in his training on this point of etiquette.

"Did you ever see anything one-half so laughable as that old lady? See her picking her way along, skirts held high, revealing her gaudy hosiery. They look as Dutch as my old master Hans—red and dark blue is the color combination I do believe! Why doesn't the goosie put up her umbrella instead of holding it so tightly under her arm? Forgotten that she was wise enough to bring it, I suppose. Guess I will follow her a way and see the excitement she's bound to create."

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

Taking up his position immediately behind her, he began the chase, for he found it such, experiencing some difficulty to keep at her heels as she dodged first this way and then that, in and out, in a frantic attempt to push her way quickly through the hurrying throng, all jostling, all wet, all bedraggled, but all good-humored, taking the sudden downpour in good part.

In fact, there is nothing more infectious than the good spirits of a fair-day crowd. Nothing is sufficient to upset their equanimity, and although in nine seasons out of ten there is a shower or a steady, cold drizzle which plays havoc with new fall millinery, suits and footwear, each year sees everyone bravely arrayed in their best bibs and tuckers as if tempting the weather man to do and send his worst.

Country maidens were there, all bedight in bright colored finery, blushing under the escort of brawny farm lads whose genial faces wore the ruddy glow of perfect health, youth and happiness peeping through the thick coat of tan left by old Sol's summer visits as they toiled harvesting the golden wheat and later in cornfield and potato patch.

Business men in their trim, conventional clothes were likewise present, glad to see so many evidences of prosperity in the exhibits; glad, too, for the brief release from office and store. Their wives, some plainly arrayed, others with nodding plumes and rustling silks, flaunting their riches with pride, accompanied them..

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

School girls and boys from the town were there, for this was "children's day" and no dull lessons called them. The whole country was in festive spirits, but most of all the school children enjoyed the freedom from books and studies.

All these, young and old, the rich and the poor, the honored and the humble, made up the throng now so eagerly seeking shelter from the driving storm, but Billy was far too much engrossed in his pursuit to have eyes for anything or anyone but the excited, blustering old woman he was tagging so persistently.

"She reminds me of the posters I see on every hand of the Dutch woman chasing after something with the big stick in her hand. Harry says it's dirt she's after, but Dick always asks, 'Well, where's the dirt, then?'"

"All this old lady needs is the wooden shoes, for she's the stick and the stride already."

"Oh, no, you'll not leave me so easily as that," as she darted into a building. "I'm right after you," and in he dodged, only to be confronted by a doorkeeper who was wrangling with the victim of Billy's ridicule.

"Vat you say? I geeve you von neekle alreaty. Now you say anodder? You vant the good leeking, young man, to dake some of your smartness out yet still!" her voice running the gamut of the scale in her excitement.



"I GEEVE YOU VON NEEKLE ALREATY. NOW YOU SAY ANODDER?"

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Ten cents is the price," calmly replied the ticket-taker, "and it's stretching the rules to let you in at all. You should be made to buy your ticket at the stand outside. We take no money here, and I'm doing wrong to admit you."

"Vell, vell, I'll pay, I'll pay! Dis rain it is so wery wet, or I spend not one cent mit you!"

She lifted her full petticoat, groped about for the hidden pocket and gingerly produced the second nickle.

The two had been so much interested in their haggling over the admission fee that Billy was unnoticed as he crept stealthily around the German woman, scarcely breathing, so anxious was he to gain entrance. Now that he was effectively shielded from the door-keeper's view by her voluminous skirts, he skurried on ahead.

"This is very queer. I thought we were in a large building. But this seems to twist and turn and twist in a most bewildering and aggravating manner," thought Billy, as he pushed rapidly forward through a narrow hallway. "I begin to think Mrs. Treat's saying that 'Things are not always what they seem,' is pretty true. —Oh, me, what *is* this?"

Billy was treading on something that swayed and rolled and pitched beneath him like the billows of an angry, boisterous sea and, indeed, he felt much like an inexperienced sailor on his maiden voyage who has not yet found his sea legs.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

“I—I—don’t like—this—buffeting. Wish—I was—well—out of—this! My stomach feels—too—shaky—for—comfort,” and in his eagerness to secure a stable footing, he made for the wall, lifting his fore feet very high and planting them very carefully and very, very firmly, trying to feel his way in the midnight blackness. At last he found the wall, or at least what he judged to be the wall, but it swayed away from him as he leaned against it for support, and the pitching and rolling and tumbling grew worse minute by minute.

“A most provoking place, and I don’t see why anyone would pay a dime to get into such a fix!” he mumbled. “Wonder where the old lady is, and how she is enjoying her sea voyage. This is worse than crossing the stormy Atlantic.”

Standing still brought no relief, and so Billy determined to forge ahead, and he resumed his perilous journey with a few excited bleats. Frightened cries from the front and rear followed. Billy repeated his bleating, and wilder grew the commotion.

“It is dark as a dungeon in here, or else I would certainly face about and make for outdoors in double quick time. But as it is, I must go on. If I collided with anyone, it might prove the undoing of both of us, and I for one am not yet ready to end my career. I’ve just enough ginger left in me to want to see what lies at the end of all this.”

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Come to think of it, this must be the 'unusual experience' foretold by the Magic Pen," and Billy's legs began to shake and his chin whiskers to tremble at fear of the unknown.

"I'm not real sure but that I want to turn back and—" but as he came to this conclusion he turned a corner in the labyrinth and emerged into a dazzle of light which blinded him for a minute after the Stygian darkness of the entrance way.

Halting to get his bearings and to take a general survey of the room, Billy found a wonderful fairyland spread out before him.

Myriads upon myriads of electric lights flooded the hall, revealing wonder upon wonder, for everywhere were the queerest people. Some were giants, others were pigmies. Part were exceedingly tall, with necks stretching out like the giraffe's at the zoo, lank arms and dangling hands, faces narrow, chins pointed and noses long enough to pry into the business of the whole world. Some, on the other hand, were only two feet tall, but, strange to relate, they were as fat as the tall persons were lean—as fat as the man in the song:

"He's six feet one way, two feet tudder,
An' his coat won't go half way round."

"Pudgy, I call 'em," decided Billy with a wag of the head, turning around to take a complete inventory of the room and its occupants. He brought up with a jerk, however, when he discovered

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

his German woman immediately behind him, in excited conversation with another creature exactly like her.

Violently she gesticulated with her large, green-covered umbrella, and just as violently did her counterpart wave her rain-stick and nod her head.

“Vot you look like me for, eh?” the angry woman inquired. “Ain’t you any sense got? I vent hill up und hill down to get here and you come fun to make mid me. Eferyboty they just laugh und laugh at me all dis day, und I von’t haf it any more yet. You are Sherman, too, so then for why do you laugh?”

“There’s just one time that I wish I had been made a boy instead of a goat. Ordinarily, goats have much better times than boys, but when I laugh so hard my fat sides ache, I wish for a pair of hands that I might hold them the way the Treat boys do when they’re mightily tickled. I’m sure I could laugh both harder and longer and enjoy it much more with such a convenience as hands about me,” thought Billy, as he watched this by-play, a broad grin spreading over his face.

With a final threatening look, the woman turned and made off, but only to confront another equally German looking person a few feet farther on, who bore a striking resemblance to her.

“Oh, Maggie, Maggie, don’t you know your own seester any more? How theen you haf got! Been seeck since I vent away from

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

home, Maggie? Shpeek to me, Maggie. 'Tis your own lofing Barbara you see," putting out her arms to welcome her in a warm embrace.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" laughed Billy uproariously. "It takes the Germans to get angry. Ha, ha! Look at her, she's trying to hug her own image!"

CHAPTER VIII

BILLY HAS AN ENCOUNTER



UCH a goosie as she is," chuckled Billy in delight, "I shall not lose sight of—O-o-o-h!" his merriment changing to wonder, for there peeping from behind the skirts of the second woman was a handsome goat, whose coat was as white, whose horns were as long and well-shaped, whose very *whiskers* were as fine as Billy's own.

There were very few occasions and small reason for Billy Whiskers to envy individuals of his kind, for, as you have often been told, he was a king among goats. He was finer looking, had a better carriage, was larger and stronger, he could leap farther and butt harder than ordinary goats, and so his proud position was not often questioned, even though he sometimes grew overbearing and a trifle too boastful of his prowess.

"O-o-oh!" he repeated, peeping out from the other side, only to find the other goat doing exactly the same thing. "He's a fine animal, to be sure, and might prove a close rival. We'll see how much backbone he has," and Billy slowly advanced, stepping high and

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

tossing his proud head from side to side the better to display his good points.

Goat Number Two likewise advanced, stepping just as high and lifting his head and tilting it provokingly to one side.

"Ah, ha! So he's going to show me he's a thoroughbred, is he? Perhaps it might be well for me to make his acquaintance and have him for my friend," weakening a little. "He's sure to be a power wherever he may live."

Billy always did believe that it was a wise thing to make friends with those who occupied prominent positions. This policy put into effect had brought both adventure and many good berths to him, and so now it had become almost second nature to Billy to bind to him as close friends and allies all those he could not conquer.

"Anyway, even if he proves as overbearing as he looks, it will be a great relief to talk to someone who can understand what I say. I am not accustomed to being without companions, especially since my Circus experience, and it's lonesome without a companion to share my pleasures."

Bleating his greeting, Billy advanced with a smile. Billy the Second nodded, but no answering bleat opened the way to conversation.

"I must admit that he's rather offish and high and mighty. He could at least pass the time of day," thought Billy, unused to having

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

his friendly overtures met so coldly. "What shall I do to bring his High Mightiness down from his throne?" and Billy half closed his eyes in thought.

"Well, the impudent rascal! I do believe he's mimicking me to arouse my wrath. I'll prove it to my entire satisfaction and then I will give him the punishment such behavior deserves."

There followed a series of advances, retreats and side steppings in which Billy's adversary proved an adept, closely imitating Billy's every move.

Jealousy began to grow in Billy's heart, and, what is more, for the first time in all his life Billy was AFRAID. Yes, he really doubted his ability to conquer this foe in a fair fight, and the longer he hesitated about closing with the enemy, the greater hold did this fear have on him.

Were not those horns most splendid specimens? Of what would they not be capable in battle?

Was not this goat strong of limb and well-nigh perfect in every point?

Did not those eyes fairly gleam with fighting zeal? And the nostrils tremble with repressed excitement of the coming contest?

As many a wise general has evaded the enemy rather than risk a battle when little would be gained if victory perched on his banners

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

and much would be lost if defeat met him, so Billy now decided that discretion demanded withdrawal, and he quietly covered his retreat by using the German woman and the ever-moving crowd as a shield.

"This is the first time Billy Whiskers has ever waved the white feather," he mused, hanging his head for very shame as he thought of the cowardice of his actions. "I can never, never redeem myself and—and, say, wouldn't all my friends deride me if they knew? But I shall hide my disgrace and keep it a close secret. Even old Brownie at the Farm shall never know, and I tell him most everything I do or think."

"Reputation is a great thing in this world, but self-esteem is better," he philosophized. "*I* shall always know that away down deep in the very bottom of my heart I am a coward, and that is what hurts. I am half tempted this minute to return and give battle even if—but hello, there he is and the opportunity to redeem myself is here!"

With that Billy was off like a rocket, and made his onslaught without a moment to consider what the result might be.

With one leap he dashed at the goat, struck something hard—and crash fell the mirror, for Billy had charged his own likeness in the Laughing Gallery. Enraged by the noise of the falling of the shattered glass, he plunged back to renew the contest. There

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

before him stood his foe unharmed, with head lowered and as eager for the fray as he.

Once more forward, once more only the impact with the splintered glass, and then another backward leap to locate his slippery enemy.

"Ah, ha! You won't escape me the third time, my fine friend," mumbled Billy, with blood in his eye, gazing steadfastly into Billy the Second's, where gleamed the same bold, undaunted spirit.

"Come on! Come on! Fight fair!" bellowed Billy, renewing the fray—and the third pier-glass was in atoms.

"Clear the room! body out!" rang the command, for those departed quickly, as eager to be out and away from the scene of strife as the burly, blue-coated officer was to have them.



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

“Hi, there, goat!” he shouted, and at the summons Billy turned to see the officer bearing swiftly down upon him.


“I know his type too well,” was his quick thought, and he wheeled, spied the door, and was out in the open air, now one of the crowd, now skulking back of the buildings, dodging in and out between the small tents to evade all possible pursuit. Once when the search grew too harrassing for comfort, he even took refuge beneath a building which was set on piles. He had to crawl under and lay perfectly flat and quiet, for cruel nails and long slivers of wood from the rough sills caught his coat and caused him exquisite pain whenever he ventured to move.

“I would like to know how the other goat fared,” he thought. “Perhaps they’ve caught *him*—hope they have. And will punish him—hope they do. He was about the most impudent piece of goathood I’ve ever met, so there!” and Billy wagged his head sagely.

He remained in safe hiding until all grew quiet—no murmur from the passing crowds, no shouts and calls of fakirs hawking their wares. The gloomy part of the day, when darkness falls without a sunset to mark its close, had come ere he poked his head out, cautiously glanced around, and found that in truth the grounds were deserted.

CHAPTER IX

A NIGHT WITH THE DUKE

 ON'T you think it is the first duty of a guest to be punctual? Especially a dinner guest?" was the Duke of Windham's greeting as Billy knocked on his stall door for admittance.

"And do you think it according to the rules of etiquette for a host to remind his guest of his shortcomings in such a fashion as this?" retorted the glib Billy.

"I've misplaced the key to the door of my house, so you'll have to jump," said the Duke, ignoring Billy's question. "I'm very sorry, but then I know you are an expert at leaping and vaulting, so it will not inconvenience you as it might old Browny, for example."

"Not at all, not at all," returned Billy, and with one light bound he was over and beside the Duke, and they were cordially greeting each other.

"Now, Will-yum, into what mischief have you been this afternoon?" queried the Duke, shaking his head to show his disapproval of any escapade.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Been on my good behavior all day, I would have you to know—and didn't find it half so dull as I had anticipated."

"Come, come, old fellow, none of that. You might as well confess first as last. There is a suspicious cut over your left eye which wasn't there when you called early this afternoon. Besides, you're all over shavings. There's a story back of it, I'm sure."

"If you must have it, old pry, when the storm gathered, I encountered the most laughable old woman," and with a chuckle of intense enjoyment at the recollection, he launched forth into the story of the Laughing Gallery episode, and it lost nothing by the telling.

"Do have some of this sweet clover for dessert," pressed the Duke as Billy finished the recital. "The flavor is delicious, I think."

Billy accepted a liberal portion of the dainty, and the Duke, feeling it his bounden duty to reprove his friend for his prank, looked very solemn and began:

"Billy Whiskers, it seems to me that a goat of your broad experience ought to have better sense than you possess, and you're a disgrace to Cloverleaf Farm!"

"Don't preach to me! You're not an example I'd care to follow!"

"Which reminds me to ask if anything has occurred at Cloverleaf Farm since my departure," calmly finished the Duke.

"Um—um," from Billy, as he busily munched the scented hay.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

“Um—um, I guess there has! More than I can begin to tell you before our bedtime!”

“I’m all ears, as the donkey would say,” and the calf playfully tweaked Billy to hurry him with the news.

“In the first place, the automobile arrived the afternoon of the day you departed for this Fair. That is how it happens I’m here,” and Billy wiggled his ears and rolled his eyes to watch the effect of this on the Duke.

He was disappointed. There stood the prize calf calmly chewing away, all unmindful of the fact that he was expected to be overwhelmed at the statement.

“Yes, I came in the automobile,” repeated pompous Billy.

Still no evidence of surprise from the Duke.

“I came to the Fair in the new machine,” almost thundered the goat.

“Well, and *I* came in the *wagon*. The main thing is we’re here, not how we came. You may proceed with your story, little Mr. Puff-ball.”

“If you’re going to be impertinent, I think I’ll go home for the night, after all,” Billy decided, and was even edging toward the door of the stall, slowly to be sure, but still moving in that direction.

“Don’t be foolish, Billy! You always carry a chip on the tip of your horns. See, here is a nice, soft bed waiting and ready for

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us. You may have that corner where the straw is the thickest," and mollified by this generosity and evidence of great good will, Billy settled himself comfortably for the night.

"Pleasant dreams," from the goat.

"Sweet sleep," from the calf, and all was quiet.

"Say!" hailed Billy so soon as he was sure the Duke was well on the road to dreamland.

"Uh-huh," sleepily.

"Duke, wake up, you sleepyhead," urged Billy.

"What's the matter now?" impatiently inquired the calf, yawning and stretching in the hope that the goat would take pity on him and leave him to his slumbers.

"I must tell you a story I heard yesterday."

"Well, out with it quick!"

"The machinist who brought the automobile told it to Mr. Treat, and it's surely a good one.

"It seems that over in York State they have a lot of foolish rules about speed limits and so on, and this man was touring last summer and experienced all sorts of trouble about it. He was spinning along a fine stretch of level country road one day, and noticed that he passed several men as he neared the outskirts of a small town. Well, these men proved to be outposts set to nab speedy automobile drivers, and they telephoned on to the next guard.

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So when he was just about to enter the town, there was an officer standing directly in the center of the roadway, waving his arms and calling on him to stop.

As he blocked the highway, of course the driver drew up, and after finding that he was making better time than the rules allowed, he courteously invited the deputy to get in and ride along to the mayor's office. The blue coat was only too glad to accept. In he jumped and away sped the car. Gradually the driver put on power until they were tearing along at a mad pace, much faster, in fact, than he had hit it up out in the country.

“ ‘Hold on, there!’ cautioned the officer. ‘Too fast, young man, entirely too fast!’

“ ‘Oh, no, sir! You see, I'm so anxious to get there and have it over.’

“ ‘But—but, sir, you've already passed the city hall!’ remonstrated the man.

“ ‘Well, well, so I have. Guess I'll have to take you on to the next town now. You see the machine is going so fast I really can't stop!’

“ ‘Can't stop?’ exploded the arm of the law. ‘I tell you you'll pay dearly for this trick. Dearly, I say! Let me out! Let me out!’ almost choking with rage.

“ ‘Certainly, my dear sir,’ as the auto slowed down. ‘Much

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joy to you on your return trip. I hope the sun isn't too hot and the road too dusty!' he remarked as he deposited the sputtering fellow three miles from the town limits, with no alternative but to walk the weary distance."

As he finished, Billy was convulsed with silent laughter, but the Duke never so much as smiled to show his appreciation of the tale. He looked solemnly at Billy and wagged his head.

"Young fellow, it would have served that driver right if his car had been confiscated, and he'd been compelled to walk to his destination. These automobile people as a rule are altogether too reckless. I hope Mr. Treat will escape the speed fever."

"You're doomed to be sadly disappointed, then," retorted Billy, confidently.

"I can't believe Mr. Treat will so far forget himself as to go racing madly about the country in his automobile, frightening the poor cattle and horses half out of their wits. Why!" and the Duke waxed indignant at the memory, "do you know, Billy Whiskers, as I was coming to the Fair yesterday, I saw a poor chicken laying all mangled in the road, the victim of one of those idiotic auto enthusiasts?"

"And do you know, Your Highness, that we made several chickens step lively and use their wings a bit beside, on the way to the

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Fair to-day? And, remember, this is your master's first time out," Billy replied, prodding the calf in the ribs in a playful mood.

"I'll not believe it!" championed loyal Duke. "Mr. Treat has far too much thought of the comfort of farm animals to make them suffer so. Let's go to sleep, I say!" fetching a yawn.

"All right," agreed Billy, and they settled themselves once more, each to his particular liking.

The Duke had given his first snore—if you don't believe that calves snore, just go out to the barn late some night next summer when you're visiting in the country, and listen to all the queer sleepy sounds of the animals and you'll agree with me that calves do snore.

Yes, Billy waited until the Duke had given his first good-sized snore, when he lifted his head and called:

"Say, Duke! Duke, I say!"

"W-e-l-l?" drowsily.

"Duke!" repeated the goat in sharp staccato.

"Y—e—e—s!" in a long drawn out yawn.

"I merely forgot to say good-night, and since you're such a stickler on manners, thought I'd tell you that you had omitted it, too."

"Good-night!" snapped the Duke, "and don't let me hear another word from you till daylight!"

CHAPTER X

TOPPY TO THE FORE



HE top o' the marnin' to yez!" Billy called to the Duke the next morning as the first faint streaks of dawn tinged the east with a ruddy glow.

Goats are no sluggards about arising. In fact, they are wide awake with the first crowing of the first chanticleer.

"The same to you, and may this be your lucky day," was the Duke's equally amiable reply.

"I've been thinking," said Billy, "while I've been waiting for you to waken—I myself roused hours ago—that I may as well take myself off before the keepers make their rounds. I suppose they come early. Am I right?"

"Well, yesterday it was about six, and I suppose that is the usual time."

"Then I'll be up and away, with many, many thanks, my dear Duke, for the pleasant time you've given me. I cannot express my appreciation in mere words."

"But, Billy, do have just a bite of breakfast first," urged his host. "Surely you can stay long enough for that! See, here's

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some of that tender clover hay that you enjoyed so much last night."

"Now you mention it, I believe I will, though I've not any appetite so early in the day."

Stepping up in front of the rudely constructed manger, Billy began to nibble at the hay. As he continued, the Duke watched him out of the corner of his eye, first glancing at Billy, now busily gorging himself, and then again at the rapidly diminishing pile of hay, then at the hay and again back at Billy. He decided to remonstrate and began:—

"Billy!"

No response.

"Oh, I say, Billy!"

"Um," from the occupied goat.

"But Billy! I say, Bill-ee!"

"Uh-huh, what is it?"

"You remind me of Mrs. Treat."

"I do? How?"

"You remind me of Mrs. Treat and a saying that's so often on her lips."

"She's most always talking, and so it's not strange I don't even now see any connection."

"You know," the Duke explained, "she says she'd much rather

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feed six men who confessed they were hungry as bears than one who declared he couldn't eat a bite."

"Well?" queried the goat, still busy at the manger.

"I've begun to think it ought to be a dozen to one when the proverb is applied to goats!"

"You do, eh? Which reminds me of a story."

"Out with it then," commanded the Duke.

"There was once a pet calf on the Treat farm, or so I've been told, who was such a greedy youngster that Tom, his owner, never dared to set the pail of milk down and leave it for him to drink. If he did, that calf would invariably plunge his nose to the very bottom, and in his unseemly haste would bunt the pail, over it would go and he would lose all.

"One day Tom carried a large wooden pail of rich, sweet milk out to the young apple orchard where the calf was kept with two pet lambs, and he waited until the calf should finish his drinking. Now that calf plunged down and drank deep and long, never stopping until he was compelled to raise his head for air. And then how he spluttered and blew the milk out through his nostrils! In his hurry to recover his breath, some milk went down his wind-pipe and such a fuss! He commenced to choke and cough, and his fat sides began to bloat. Tom raced to the barn for Chris, the hired man, who hurried to the rescue. As soon as he saw the calf's lolling

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tongue, wobbly legs and bulging sides, he went for the buggy whip and they ran that down his throat. Then, breaking off an apple branch, Chris used it to urge the calf to keep on the move and around and around that orchard they circled until every bit of the bloating had disappeared. Let—me—see,” pondered the goat, as if racking his brains, “I believe they do say his name was the Duke of Windham. And now that very self-same goat dares to stand up and preach about the wickedness of greediness! Oh me!”

Billy pretended to be boiling over with rage, though really not a whit disturbed, and, taking the very last wisp of hay in his mouth, chewed it slowly, as if it was too good to lose any of the pleasure by hurrying, all the time glowering frightfully at the Duke.

“You’re a heathen! You’ve no glimmering of the first rules of politeness, and deserve just this—”

But the nimble Duke was ready for a frolic, and cleared Billy’s back as neatly as most boys do when playing leap-frog.

Over and over Billy charged, but each time Duke escaped by using the light leap. They were in the very midst of the fun, and had forgotten all about the dreaded morning visit of the keeper, when the rattle of a key in the padlock gave warning. Billy heard—and instantly Billy knew what it meant. In pure self-defence, to escape sure capture and tedious imprisonment, the goat backed to the farther corner and quickly made ready.

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Back swung the gate and in came a tall, slender youth. Billy felt a qualm or two about his real right to attack so delicate a boy, but when he saw the lad take a glance around and quickly turn to flee at sight of a goat cornered as he was, he decided such cowardly action deserved a drubbing, and with a bound he took the fellow just below the knees.



His joints worked beautifully, Billy thought, for he collapsed in a heap on Billy's broad back, and his long arms flew out for some support, and his longer legs first dangled on the ground and then flailed the air, conforming to every motion of the beast beneath him.

"Ouch! Ouch!" groaned Billy, after having made several uneven leaps and bounds, the better to show his rider the advantage of a goat over all other steeds.

"Ouch! Ouch! He's holding on by my coat! He's pulling my hair out by its very roots. He has no humanity—not a bit!" wailed Billy.

That the tables were merely turned had not occurred to Billy,

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nor the fact that he was receiving only a fraction of the discomfort he was giving.

"I'll not stand it! I'll not have it! Ouch! Ouch! He's caught my tail, he has! Ouch!"

Billy was *mad*. Not angry, but furiously mad. And gathering all his strength, he made one high backward leap, turned a complete somersault, and his victim described a circle, too, landing in a deep mud puddle, left by the storm of the day before.

The fellow had no more than realized what had befallen him than Billy was upon his feet and charging at him. That he had chosen a muddy seat seemed no very great disadvantage to Billy. In fact, he now determined to give him a mud bath, and first he prodded him on one side and then on the other. All the fight the fellow ever possessed had fled when he saw that magnificent pair of horns bearing down on him. He screened his eyes with his hands and gave himself up to the tender mercies of the enemy, rolling this way and that at Billy's pleasure.

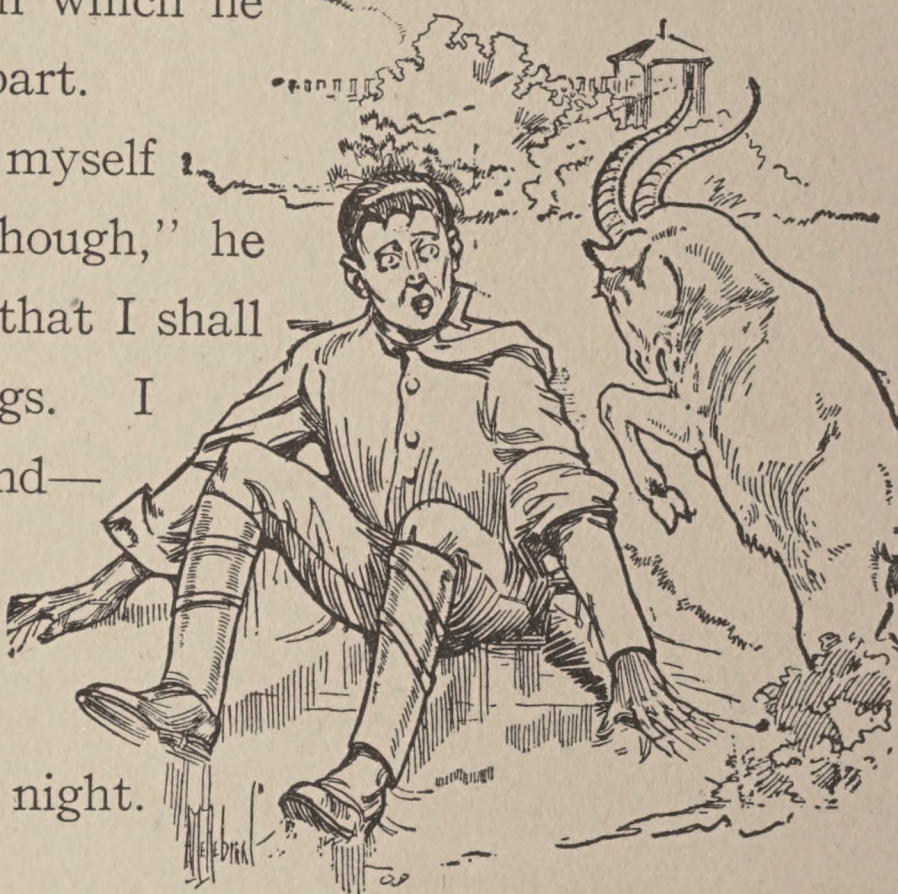
"He's so deep in the mire that he may not be able to get out," thought Billy, when he himself began to pant for breath. "It's only fair to put him on his feet, I suppose," and so he hooked him by the coat, and with a toss that required every atom of his strength—though Billy never admitted the fact—the boy was up once more, though oozing with mud.

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“He’ll never show himself to his chief in that state. It will take an hour to make him presentable, and in the meantime I must make tracks. Still, I’m not one to run from danger, and it may be the fellow will never report his experience.”

Billy had studied human nature enough to know that one does not willingly tell a story in which he does not play a creditable part.

“I’ll not dare to show myself in this vicinity to-night, though,” he meditated. “That means that I shall have to seek new lodgings. I wonder who will be so kind—but let me think! Toppy also came to be exhibited. It’s no more than her plain duty to entertain me one night. I’ll hunt her up!”



Putting this resolution into action, he hurried down the Cattle Row. At the farther end was a large barn, now his objective point.

Long before break of day, the coming of the morning had been noisily heralded by the cocks, and Billy knew that all the fuss came from this building.

“One thing I forgot to ask the Duke, and that is how long this

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county jollification lasts. Toppy surely won't know—it's her first experience here, as she's nothing but a pullet. Of course, the Duke is not much better—nothing but a calf—but at least he could inquire of some of his older neighbors."

As the goat approached the barn which had been temporarily turned into the exhibition house for the chickens, he made a wide detour, circled round it twice and reconnoitered thoroughly, to reassure himself that it was altogether safe for him to enter. Seeing no one in sight, he hurried back to the main entrance, bent on finding Toppy.

"Of course she'll see me as soon as I enter and will fly straight to me. Toppy has been my vassal ever since I saved her from the hawk down in the wood lot when she was just a scrawny, ugly chick getting her pin feathers."

Billy was by this time well inside the building, but no flutter of wings or delighted cackle from Toppy greeted him. Not a chicken was busily scratching in the deep straw that covered the rough flooring. Instead there were little, square boxes—piles and piles of them—set neatly in rows one upon the other, each with a wire screen front, and each containing a chicken. Poor things! cooped up in tiny houses that were scarcely large enough to permit them to turn around without stepping in the dish holding their portion of water for the entire day.

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Billy's kind heart bubbled over with rage at the sight, and his eyes kindled at the thought that Topsy was in one of these prison houses.

"Our Topsy, who has always had the freedom of the Farm, to be shut up in such a bird cage!" he lamented, waxing indignant at the situation.

Up and down he walked, looking in each box, always hoping that the next one would hold his feathered friend. Big Buff Cochins, tiny Bantams, so full of fighting zeal, Wyandottes, Speckled Hamburgs, every kind was there but Plymouth Rocks.

"I'll search all morning if necessary," he vowed, as he turned into the third aisle.

Carefully he conducted his quest now, not merely casting careless glances up and down the long rows. Instead, he peered into every box, though it meant tedious and wearisome work, for at last he had reached that part of the exhibit devoted to the pretty Plymouth Rocks, all decked out in their Quakerish gray. The first three rows of boxes were easily inspected, being on Billy's own level. The fourth and fifth tiers were a real problem, however, and caused the eager searcher much trouble. Each time he wished to look into one of these homes perched up so high, he had to rear up on his hind feet. This is not a natural position for four-footed animals, and Billy often lost his balance. He was afraid to use the

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boxes for support for his front legs, lest they might topple over and the consequent cackling and crowing of the terrified fowls put to rout his plan of rescue, for this his search for Toppy had now become.

Down, down, down went Billy's heart as he progressed. Tears of vexation welled up in his eyes, for he was a very determined goat and disappointment was hard to bear.

"No use, I guess," he decided, and he was hurrying along, glancing neither to the right nor to the left, but wholly bent on reaching the door quickly.

"Cluck, cluck! Cluck, cluck!" sounded a familiar call.

Billy stopped short.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck!" scolded the hen. "Billy Treat, turn back; turn right back, I say!"

"Why, Toppy girl!"

"No Toppy-girling me!" she responded, tossing her head saucily. "You were going right by with nary one word to me! I'll not be wheedled into good nature by any of your soft words, Mr. Billy!"

"Didn't you notice how sorrowful I looked?" he questioned.

"Sorry? Why, I thought you looked more like a whipped dog. Your poor stub of a tail lay down flat—and that is a pretty sure sign that you have been in some trouble."

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"I have been in trouble, but the trouble is you, Mistress Toppy. I've been hunting for you, and had just given up in deep despair."

"What can I do for you?"

"Why, nothing. I thought I could do something for you."

"Oh, Billy!"

"Don't 'Oh, Billy' me!" he sniffed in high disdain.

"But, Billy dear," she soothed, "you can be of such use to me just now! There's a dear, say you'll do it!"

"I'm not in the habit of refusing your requests, Biddykins,"—and this from Billy Whiskers, whom most animals thought so heartless and cruel! Which only proves the more conclusively that but the very closest of our friends ever know us through and through.

"Well, then," clucked the Plymouth Rock beauty, "though they have labeled me with a blue tag it's not worth the price of being caged like this. What I want you to do is to get me out of this box."

"The very thing I meant to do!"

"Thanks! Thanks!" she clucked.

"Now to plan the details of the escape," proceeded Billy. "Tell me, where is the door to your house?"

"The whole front is the door, kind sir," she made reply, "and it's most securely locked, I fear."

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"You're sure?" for this would be a hard problem.

"Yes, sure of it. Every time they bring me fresh water and corn, the man turns the knob there on the left side."

"Hump!" and Billy eyed the fastening.

"But you can very easily tear a place open in this wire screening that will be big enough for me to squeeze through. Oh, please say you can!" she pleaded.

"Better'n that I can do, Miss Toppy. Watch closely and you will see what will make your little eyes pop open wider than they've ever been before."

Billy went up close to the Plymouth Rock's tiny house, lowered his head, and after turning it this way and that, he stepped proudly back, bleating his satisfaction and pleasure.

"Step out, pretty Toppy, and enjoy a stroll about the grounds," he invited.

"Step out? Step out?" she clucked indignantly. "I would if I could. Don't make my life more unbearable than it is by such idle words!"

"But Toppy, I mean it. Come out! Your cage is a prison no longer. Hurry out of your cell and enjoy the fine morning with your friend."

"You old torment!" Toppy scolded, and, forgetting the barrier

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between them, she fluffed up her feathers and flew at him to peck him on the nose, his tender spot.

Open flew the door and out tumbled the hen, fluttering wildly to the floor.

"Help! Help!" she cackled.

"You're free, Toppykins!" congratulated her rescuer, "Hurrah, Hurrah!" he exulted.

"Free, you naughty fellow? Whoever was in a worse fix than I am this moment, I'd like to know?" was her inconsistent retort.

"What do you propose doing with me now I'm out?"

"Do?" helplessly from Billy.

"You certainly must know I can't wander around loose all day in this dreadful place. And I can't travel all the way back to Cloverleaf Farm. What shall I do? Oh, dear, what shall I ever do?" she wailed.

"You're a ninny, and that's my opinion of you! Hop back into that thing and I'll lock you up."

"I will, you horrid Billy! I might have known better than to listen to any of your wild schemes," and up she flew.

Billy wasted no time in closing the door—an easy task, but when one attempt failed to turn the wooden button that secured it, a wicked gleam leaped to his eye.

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“Ha, ha! A good joke on the whimsical little lady! I’ll leave it unlocked. She is sure to have a most miserable day of it, and won’t she splutter when I tell her liberty was within her reach?” and chuckling to himself, he hurried off, unheeding Toppy’s plaintive calls for him to return.

“She has changed her mind once too often,” he mumbled, “Now she’ll pay for it.”

CHAPTER XI

THREATENED WITH LOCKJAW



YOU know how time flies between the moment you open your sleepy eyes at six o'clock and the warning the first school bell gives at eight, which finds you just up from the breakfast table, with school togs yet to don and hair to give a final smoothing? Well, the minutes had fluttered by just as rapidly as that for Billy on this eventful morning. To be sure, he had spent needless time in prosecuting the search for Toppy. And before that, he had dallied long enough over his encounter with the lank lad he had left in such a muddy, muddy plight.

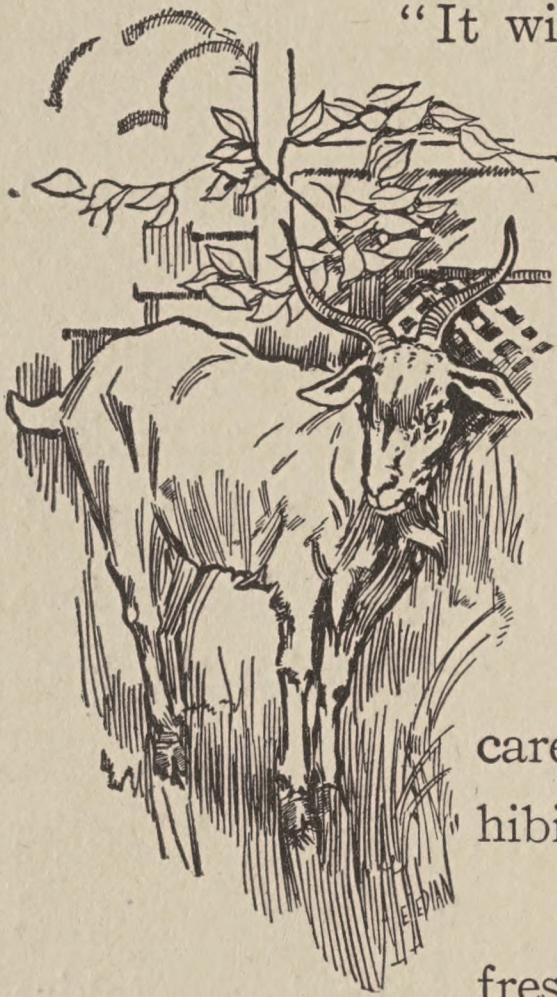
It was eight o'clock and after before he was aware, and booths were being opened by their owners, and their stock in trade arranged to best possible advantage to increase the sales of the day. Fakirs were already in evidence, choosing shady spots from which to hawk their wares.

Guards were on duty even this early, but now gathered in little social groups for a bit of gossip before their more arduous tasks of handling the great crowds should begin in real earnest.

Billy fully realized the risk he was running in being abroad on

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the nearly deserted grounds, for it made his presence uncomfortably conspicuous—and men are not disposed to view a goat with any too much favor. They know far too well the mischief of which they are capable.



“It will be by far the wisest thing for me to do to lay low,” cogitated Billy. “But I shall take care to find a more comfortable place than that low coop I occupied yesterday afternoon. Ugh!” and he fetched a shiver at the recollection, “I can feel the splinters pulling my coat even now.”

Shaking himself vigorously and pricking up his ears, he chose his way with care, proceeding down the street lined with exhibition halls, tents and booths.

“Appears to me I smell pop-corn! Just freshly popped, and with lots of sweet, rich butter, too! I can fairly taste it. Pop-corn! How I do like the snowy kernels!”

Following the appetizing odor, he soon found himself in front of a tiny booth, all gay with red and white bunting and flaunting flags at its four corners. Just outside stood the popper, the escaping steam singing its merry little song.

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Billy eyed it a moment, sniffed the air, and then circled about the building to spy out the situation carefully.

“Abandoned, as I had hoped. The keeper must be away at breakfast, and while he is gone, I’ll have mine. At least, just the finishing bites. I began my breakfast a couple of hours ago, but that rude boy interrupted the operation. I know I should starve without anything until noon.”

Billy hesitated no longer, but marched boldly in and back of the counter.

Have you ever wished you could be in that wonderful place—back of the counter in a candy store? Back where all the cases are standing open inviting you to come and take and eat to your heart’s content, instead of in front where the glass is between you and all the goodies so temptingly spread out? There were piles of chocolate creams, peppermint chews, peanut brittle, caramels, shining jars of sunshine sticks, and pan upon pan heaped high with taffy, that favorite confection of all fair goers.

All this sweet array was spread there before Billy’s greedy gaze, and when he realized the feast that was before him, he closed one eye with that provoking wink all his own, licked his chops with a peculiar circular motion of the tongue that was one of his very naughtiest tricks, according to his good mother’s judgment, and paraded up and down, wondering just where to begin.

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Did he like chocolates better than butterscotch? Or was the crisp brittle his favorite? There was the pinch.

Passing along the counter in this undecided state, he chanced to peep underneath, and there, luck of all lucks! was a great pail heaping full of pop-corn, with a generous coating of molasses, all waiting to be packed into the small cartons that later in the day every boy and every girl would be holding and declaring with each generous mouthful that "Chew 'em" was by all odds quite the best pop-corn confection ever made and sold over the counter.

Billy had never lost his youthful liking for corn, and now wasted not another minute debating where he should begin—he *knew*. Nothing could possibly tempt him from the spot until he was fully satisfied.

I am sorry to say it, but I must if I wish to be honest, Billy forgot his manners, and in his eagerness, got into the pail with his feet! He gulped the corn down so fast and buried his nose so deep that he lost his breath, and one stubborn kernel scooted down his Sunday throat. Billy choked, and with one mighty cough up came the offending thing. Never an animal with a great amount of patience, Billy grew angry at even this very brief interruption, though it was not a minute until his head was down as deep as ever.

The nearer he approached the bottom, the stickier grew the corn, and the better Billy liked it. Evidently the molasses had been

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poured over the corn not long before Billy's entrance, and the whole pailful left to harden and crystallize. That on top had been just right for packing, but down in the pail, where the air could not get in its work, the syrup was thick and still warm.

Billy gorged himself, with never a thought of the possible ruin it would work to his stomach, but, fortunately, goats' stomachs are not the delicate organs that boys and girls have to take care of, and he had never been taught how wrong it is to eat too much of rich things that injure the busy, hard working servant that gives us strength.

Down, down went his nose, and then, with a sigh that the very last of the brown, sweet stuff had disappeared, he stepped back, and took a deep breath of satisfaction.

"'Tis the richest meal I've had since—since—well, that I've ever had. I can't begin to remember anything half so good in all my lifetime. But I wish that corn would drop off my whiskers and neck! It's uncomfortable, though I did not notice it while I was eating. I'll take a little of that pure white taffy all spread out on that enormous pan, and then be off to greener pastures."

Putting the thought into action, he hopped up on the counter and walked along until that particular taffy tray was reached. He opened his mouth, took one generous bite, and began to chew.

What was the trouble? What had he done? Would it ever

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end? He'd starve to death if it didn't, starve slowly, yet surely growing thinner and thinner, hungrier and hungrier minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, and week by week. Perhaps he would live months and *years* and never be able to munch the sweet grass and fragrant clover again.



These were Billy's sombre thoughts as he worked in vain to open his jaws.

No use. They were held as in a vise, and no effort on his part would loosen the hold of the vile stuff on his teeth. It made his jaws ache, and his eyes began to bulge with a strange fear as his struggles proved so futile.

Thinking to flee from the danger that threatened him, he bounded out of the booth and sped on and on, quite without thought of his destination, his one aim being to rid himself of the terror. On and ever on he ran, taking long, easy leaps, until he brought up short at a high fence which bordered the grounds. This served to bring his flight to an end, and he disconsolately huddled down in the long grass.

"I've but one friend on the grounds, outside of the over-proud

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Duke, and I'd die before I'd show myself to him in this plight. Toppy must help me out, and I believe I can rely on her," and no sooner had the thought popped into his head than he was up and off like a streak to hunt up the little hen.

It was no trouble at all to locate her particular box this time, and though it was not the haughty goat that had presented himself before her but a short two hours ago, he hastened along.

"Oh, Billy, Bill-ee!" with the accent strong on the last syllable, she cackled with much concern, for Toppy had been crouching down close to the screen ever since Billy had walked off in such high disdain.

"Billy!" she repeated, "Whatever is the matter?"

No reply.

Billy merely came up close, held up his head and wagged it to show he could not make answer.

"You're all over pop-corn, and you're a perfect sight! Let me out of this cage, and I'll pick it off for you," she bribed.

Remembering that she believed herself locked in, Billy reached up and pretended to turn the button, and, satisfied now that it was open, she gave a gentle push, back swung the wire door, and down she fluttered once more, but, cautious creature that she was, she curbed her delight and did not give so much as one victorious cackle at her release.

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"Come along with me," she commanded, assuming the leadership and strutting down the aisle. Billy, meek as a lamb, followed, and they brought up at the rear of the barn, otherwise known as the Poultry Show.

"Stand just here, Billy," she ordered, "and I will hop up on this hay stack so that I'll be more on your level."

She found a secure foothold, while Billy, now ready to do anything to rid himself of the stick-whiskers, impatiently stood near by.

Toppy proceeded to tidy the goat, picking off the corn with a right good will, and enjoying it as she did so, for it furnished a tooth-

"This is really the first time I've dared to peck him," she mused, "and now that I have so good an opportunity, I shall repay him for a few things he's done to my kith and kin. He mustn't think he can go scot-free for all his naughtiness.



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

Don't I remember the chase he used to give my poor mother and her flock of little downy children, and how tired our poor wobbly legs would be ere we could gain the shelter under the barn? All that saved us then was the fact that it was so low he could not crawl underneath. This is the first time I've ever really enjoyed my friendship with him, and I mean to make up for lost time,"—Topsy meditated.

"Here, you imp," thought Billy, for she was giving him a peck here and a vicious dab there, and the henpecked goat was really getting much the worst of the bargain, for he could not make protest—his jaws were still out of commission. So he perforce swallowed his wrath and submitted meekly to the process.

"Billy," commenced Topsy, "you are always and forever getting into some mix-up like this, and always appealing to your friends for aid. But you are such a close-mouthed creature no one ever knows the real truth about your mischief making. I think in slight return for this service of mine you really owe it to me to tell how this happened."

Instead of replying, he shook his head, though not so much from a desire to keep his adventure a state secret as from the fact that that dreadful stuff wouldn't let him speak. He hung his head, the while Topsy was busily engaged in cleaning his coat.

"I'm not quite so close-mouthed as some people think. If only

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

I could talk, I'd surely do so, though there have been occasions when I'd not breathe a word of an escapade like this."

He gave one appealing look at Toppy, and in his surprise to see her eating away as she worked, he gave a gasp and then a bigger one for to his inexpressible joy and relief he could open his mouth! The taffy had slowly but surely melted, and he was able to eat and talk and laugh once more.

CHAPTER XII

THE PUMPKIN MAN



O sooner did Billy make this glad discovery than he straightway forgot his benefactress, and trotted off, leaving her perched there on the hay stack, deploring his lack of gratitude.

“Just like my husband, Coxy. You can work and work and work for him, and just so soon as he is fine and dandy, off he struts to make friends with some vain young pullet,” and she snuggled down in the hay, much too grieved to venture out and explore the surrounding territory.

In the meantime Billy was hurrying off, for he knew he had much to see and do before the close of this, the greatest day of the Fair.

“That silly thing of a hen never surmised that I couldn’t talk. She thought I was just disinclined to share my secret, and would not take her into my confidence. Now I have managed to fix myself up without much outside assistance, I really can’t see the necessity of confessing the box I was in. One often gets into trouble by telling too much, but seldom, if ever, by saying too little. That’s my working policy.”

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"It must be growing along toward ten o'clock, if I can judge anything by the sun's progress. I must at least inspect one hall before lunch and then, after that, the races will begin. I missed them entirely yesterday, and the Duke of Windham says that they are the principal attraction of the Fair. I must be there early to-day in order to secure a good view."

Now the building Billy was approaching was by far the most pretentious on the grounds. It was fully one hundred and fifty feet long by forty wide, and there were great doors at either end, one swallowing up throngs of people all pressing in, and the other pouring forth an equal number.

"I must get in there by some hocus-pocus," Billy thought, and he joined in the press.

Up three steps and then he was in a wonderful place. The moment they gained entrance, there was ample room, for the people separated into groups, one going this way and another that, down one aisle and up another, wandering along examining the exhibits.

Down the center of the building were long tables, each bearing its burden of fruit. One section was devoted exclusively to the apple crop, and there were plates upon plates of the wholesome fruit, each specimen with glowing cheeks, the result of careful and prolonged rubbing. Greenings, rambows, pippins, russets, northern



THERE PEEPING FROM BEHIND THE SKIRTS OF THE SECOND WOMAN WAS A HANDSOME GOAT.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

spies—every kind was in evidence, all labeled and each species vieing with the other for popularity.

Another section showed pears, hard and still green, to be sure, but great, large pears that promised delicious eating bye and bye when they should be mellow. Guarding each section was a farmer boy, stationed there both to protect the exhibits from pilfering by the sightseers and also to answer the numerous questions they propounded.

Around the walls of the room were exhibits of everything that the good ground yields so bounteously—potatoes, squashes, corn, and grains. One progressive farmer had brought an entire pumpkin vine, to show its enormous length and its great burden of golden fruit.

But the center of interest appeared to be half way down the hall, for there gathered the largest group of wondering people, who pushed and crowded their way to the front, each eager to secure a glimpse of that which caused so many admiring oh's and ah's. And Billy, of course, was not slow in reaching this spot.

What did he care for common, everyday apples when there was something that promised new and greater interest?

Up he marched, and knowing the best way to forge ahead was to use his horns, he stooped to that, and butted his way to the front.

“Oh, the pumpkin man, the pumpkin man!” cried a little young-

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

ster delightedly, jumping up and down in his excitement, and there, to be sure, he stood in full array.

A very wonderful man he was. His head was round as a ball, for it was fashioned from a fat little pumpkin, the roundest that the fields could furnish. Eyes were made from corn husks, cut as large and round as a silver dollar, while the eyebrows were heavily outlined with black ink. Nose and mouth were cut like boys and girls do for jack-o'-lanterns for Hallowe'en pranks, and teeth were furnished by large, perfect kernels of corn.

This queer fellow's body resembled to a striking extent an elongated pumpkin, and his arms were perfectly matched, long-necked summer squashes. His hands were doubled up into fists, being the enlarged ends of the squashes. A pair of legs were giant ears of golden corn, and the dandy was togged out in a corn-husk cravat jauntily tied in a four-in-hand, and his feet boasted a pair of ox-blood ties, though most people would have called them red ears of field corn.

"Hello, Pumpkin Man," was Billy's cordial and friendly greeting, for Billy felt he could claim acquaintanceship with anything and everything hailing from a farm.

The Pumpkin Man maintained a dignified silence and stared straight ahead.

"How-d'-ye-do, old fellow?" Billy repeated, edging a trifle closer,

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

for so popular a man must be one whom it would pay to know most intimately.

The Pumpkin Man glowered at him—or so Billy thought.

“The impudent rascal! Most likely he wants to put on citified airs. I’ve heard of people who were ashamed to own that they hailed from the good old farm. The ninnies! What would all the city folks do without the farmer? Why, I think a man who can farm the way Mr. Treat does is one of the greatest men in all the land, and ought to be ranked with bank presidents, professors, judges, and so on. But if it is homage he wants, homage he shall have.”

“How do you do, Mr. Pumpkin Man?” Billy ventured the third time, now bowing low before him in a courtesy.

But not a sign of recognition lighted up the fellow’s face. He maintained that blank stare, which was most disconcerting to our Billy Whiskers.

“I shall make him pay dearly for insulting me so, and before all this crowd of watching, curious people, too.”

His wrath up, Billy charged, and hit the foe squarely in the stomach. Evidently one round was enough for the dignified Pumpkin Man, for over he tumbled, and what a fall it was!

Arms, legs, body went flying this way and that. It seemed he had no real backbone at all! His head rolled forward, his body

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

back, and arms flew sidewise. Such a wobbly, make-believe man! Unfortunately, Billy's horns caught the head as it fell, and hooked the ample, grinning, impudent mouth. Billy shook himself to free him of the burden, but that merely served to make the pumpkin head settle down more securely. There was a mighty, thundering roar of amusement from the spectators of this little comedy, and at the sound Billy, always over-sensitive to ridicule, turned with but one thought, and that was to escape from the scene of the encounter and his disgrace.

But no sooner did he wheel about than he saw all backs—not one person in the whole crowd was brave enough to face him, and they were making undue haste to fly from the building before the goat should take it into his fertile brain to charge them as he had the “punkin head.”

Those in the lead did not know what was the real trouble, for moment by moment they were joined by others from different parts



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

of the hall. They only knew that there was a great press of people crowding toward the door, and supposing that something dreadful must be the cause, were excitedly pushing toward the exit. Frightened women, terrified children, and men in much the same state, it must be confessed, were in the throng, and there rose a perfect babel of cries:

“Fire! Fire!”

“No, no!” came the contradictory cry from someone who had retained a grain of common sense. “Just clear the room! No fire, just a goat!” but his voice was drowned in the uproar and shuffling of many eager feet.

Those on the outside, seeing unmistakable evidences of excitement, were just as anxious to gain entrance as those inside were to get out, such is the perverseness of the human family. The result was that neither could move, and there Billy was at the back, and good use did he make of the opportunity. He had more butting space offered, without any show of resistance, or offer of flight, than ever before in his career.

The farm lads who acted as guards stood bravely at their posts of duty, but this did not mean that they took no active part in the fray. No, indeed! Apples flew from all quarters of the room, and pears, too, hard as bullets, hit him in tender places.

Maddened by this, Billy butted the harder, but when he found

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

there was no hope of opening a way to the outer world and freedom, he turned and faced his tormentors from the rear, and then there was wild scrambling. Many are those who are willing to pursue a fleeing foe, but few there be brave enough to prosecute the attack on an advancing enemy in such battle array as this Billy goat.

Dodging under the tables, they tried to crawl to safety, but Billy proved to be much more nimble on all fours than they, and swept up and down that hall, in and out, overturning tables, scattering the fruit, and punishing the boys, laying in ruin what was but a short hour before the admiration of the entire county.

By the time Billy had succeeded in putting to entire rout the attacking boys, the throng pressing the doorway had disappeared, and he made his way out without difficulty.

Heaving a sigh of relief, he delivered himself of this thought:

“If ever a goat was entitled to a good dinner, it is Billy Whiskers to-day. Yes, sir-ee!”

CHAPTER XIII

A TRIUMPHANT HOME-COMING



AND if my memory does not serve me falsely, I think there is a tent over yonder, and just around the corner bearing a sign like this:

DINNERS SERVED HERE

BY THE LADIES OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

PRICE \$.25

Mrs. Treat is a Congregationalist, and if all the church ladies are the experienced and skilful cooks she is, their patrons need not worry about receiving a full twenty-five cents worth. It always pays to be early at such a place, that I know full well, for the baskets may be empty before the last customers are fed. I'm not sure that the Treats will be at the Fair to-day, so I will be compelled to forage, and this rather appeals to me. I've often heard about church dinners.

"Hurrah, over there is the very place I'm seeking. And how amiable the mistress of ceremonies looks, standing over the stove at the rear of the tent. Doesn't a white apron swathing a woman make you think involuntarily of things to eat? I suppose she's pre-

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

paring the coffee. I'll not go in by the back door. She guards that too closely. Under the side of the tent is good enough for Billy."

And under he went, as nimble as a kid, being egged on by gnawing hunger.

"Huh! I guess I *am* early. The tables are not yet spread. But they needn't think I'm going to wait as long as that for a bite to eat. Their sign says

DINNERS SERVED

and they've absolutely no right to post such a notice when it isn't true. They're sailing under false colors. I'll serve myself, seeing they are such fibbers."

Truth to tell, this suited Billy much better anyway, and he began to explore the territory under the picnic tables. Numerous baskets, all heaped with eatables, were snugly stowed away here for safe keeping until it was time to lay the tables, and Billy decided to examine each in turn. In one he discovered an immense pan of nicely browned beans. Boston baked beans, just fresh from some generous oven needed to extend no second invitation to Billy. He greedily devoured them, and then passed on to the neighboring basket.

"My eyes, what pies!" he chuckled, "but I'm not ready for dessert as yet. There's no use in trying to hurry me on to the last course.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

I'll return to you, so don't feel slighted," as he crept stealthily on, addressing the pastry.

Other baskets yielded generously of sandwiches, salads, pickles, fruits—everything to his exact liking and preference, and no lively conscience warned Billy that he was doing anything wrong in satisfying his appetite in this manner.

If one was not expected to eat, then why was he permitted to get hungry? That was the argument he put forth. And if one was hungry, why shouldn't he eat—and especially when there were so many and such good things in front of one?

"I believe I'll lay low until they begin to serve, for that big barrel at the back of the tent means just one thing—ice-cream, and after it is opened, it may be that I can manage to get a portion. At least it is worth an effort. It is the next best thing to a good, cool drink, and I see no likelihood of quenching my thirst. All they seem to have is coffee, and I never yet have touched the vile stuff. It smells good enough, but I value my nerves far too much to touch it."

By this time the women were bustling about, spreading snowy linen over the rough tables, and placing the dishes and silver. It required some maneuvering for Billy to edge his way unnoticed from table to table, but he gradually approached the back of the tent

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

and took up his station under the last table, crouched into the darkest corner, near the side of the tent.

He had not long to wait until the clinking of glasses and the clatter of knives and forks told that patrons had begun to come, and the swish of skirts told him that waitresses were busily serving meals.

"My waiting time is nearly over," he decided, and poked his head under the tent just enough to get a glimpse of the ice-cream freezer. "Now the very moment that that burly fellow leaves—as he surely will after the first rush is over—I'll make the raid."

He hardly winked, so anxious was he to remain undiscovered, for this was the crucial test. Once or twice he was forced to draw back wholly within the tent, fearing that the man dishing out the cream would face about and find the marauding Billy so near. But Billy had an unlimited amount of patience about some things, and he was in the mood to exert it for the promised treat.

"There!" sighed the man at last, mopping his brow, "that is the hardest work I've done for many a day. I think I need a strong cup of coffee to brace me up for the next round," and he hurried off before an impatient waitress should demand his further services.

"Now's my time," and Billy was up on the freezer, and had taken one great mouthful of the cream.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"O-o-oh! What a dreadful pain it gives me in my temples. I must swallow it very slowly, I see," raising his head. "I wish I had some cake to eat with it. Mrs. Treat always serves it that way at Cloverleaf Farm. And now I understand why."

Down he plunged his head once more, but he never took the second mouthful, for someone rudely seized him by his abbreviated tail, and after describing a circle in the air, he landed on the ground many feet away.

Trembling with pain, Billy darted blindly straight ahead, caring little where he went if only he escaped this giant of strength. The paroxysm of fright left him as soon as he heard a tumult of voices, and he opened his eyes in wonder to find that he had rushed into the tent, now crowded to its full capacity with diners. Such commotion as followed defies description. Everyone rose to their feet simultaneously, as Billy paused for a moment undecided



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

what to do or where to go, and then made a dash for the other door. A waitress bearing aloft a loaded tray advanced down the narrow aisle, and it was no fault of Billy's that she went sprawling



and her dishes flying for he did his best to swerve to the right and give her the right of way. But the girl

turned to her left in her excitement, and so a collision resulted. Billy darted on,

escaped the shower of falling china, only to hook his horns in a rent in one of the table-cloths, and there followed another and a

greater clatter of falling, breaking dishes.

One man with more presence of mind than the rest reached for the cloth, thinking thus to arrest Billy's flight, but with one vigorous forward leap the

linen was torn from Billy's horns, and he rushed out of the tent free.

"I'll guarantee that some poor fellow will waste a quarter buying a meal ticket there, and then they'll find their provisions have mys-

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

teriously disappeared, and they cannot give him a square meal," Billy meditated, strolling slowly along in the genial sunshine of the early October day. In fact, after his exertions in the Congregational dinner tent, he felt disinclined to hurry, and he ambled along leisurely, a good-natured smile hovering around his mouth.

"Now for the races. Shall I take a grandstand seat? That's the subject up for discussion. I believe I prefer a little more room than they give one there, and will occupy a special grandstand of my own. That high road-cart over there offers a splendid vantage point, and I'm thinking no one will care to dispute my right to it once I am installed and if they do—well, I think I may be able to establish my ownership with small difficulty. Possession is nine-tenths of the law, so I've heard them say."

At this time of the day, before the races were begun, the race course was a common thoroughfare, and people crossed and recrossed without fear. Therefore Billy now crept under the two fences outlining the course, and in a few moments was viewing the world from his elevated seat in a most stylish turn-out.

A rattle of the gong at the judges' stand announced that the hour for beginning the races had arrived, and out trotted the horses, each with his jaunty jockey in gay cap and trousers to match. What a storm of applause! How wild the people were over the promised contest for speed!

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

Up and down trotted the horses, to display their good points and to warm up for the first heat.

"The bay is a beauty. She's made for the track."

"But look at the slender chestnut! Fleet limbs, those."

"I'll pin my faith on the black "

These and many like remarks greeted Billy's ears, for everyone was ready to express their opinions of the values of each entry.

Now they are lining up for the first start, and under the rope they go, but not all together. Back they turn and again the bell sounds the signal. This time they are off, and how gallantly each horse responds to the will of the driver. Now they dash around the long oval, each taking his course, now on the outside, now on the inside as they make the curves.

"The black! The black!" comes the cry of approval as the dainty little mare forges ahead by one whole length.

"The bay gains. She wins! She wins!" and as they pass under the line and wheel about ready to repeat the performance, the excited spectators settle back into their seats, relieved of the strain and stress.

Again the jockeys form their line, each in his proper place, each eager to urge his mount to full capacity for speed, each hoping that this time the shouts of encouragement and approbation will be for him.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

Billy is one of the best watchers. He is trembling in every limb, for well he knows the stress of the day for the animals in the harness, well he knows how earnestly each of the racers yearns to win, and how much they are disappointed when they come in any place but first.

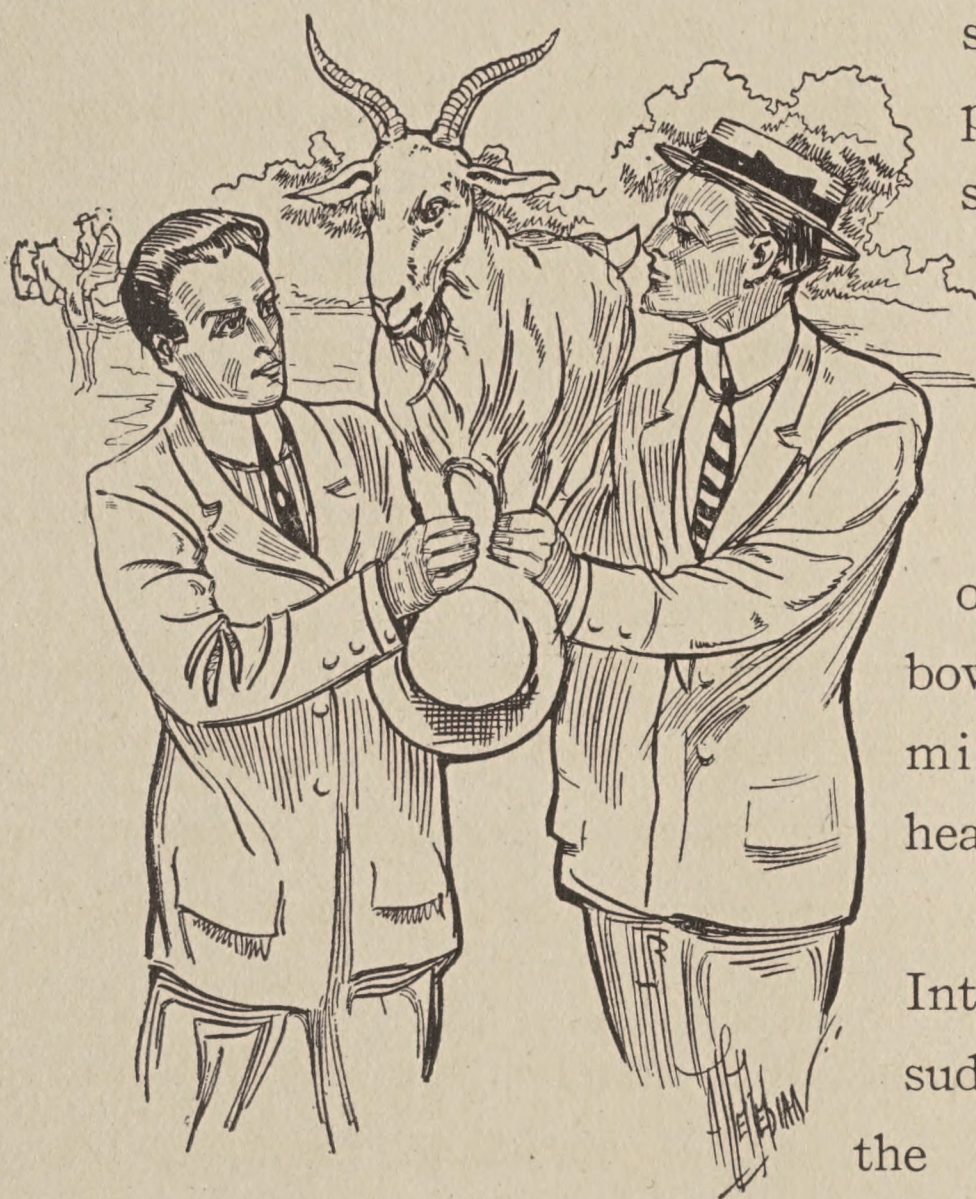
Around and around they fly, jockeys using their whips, urging on and ever on with words uttered scarcely above a whisper, yet heard and obeyed by the alert steeds. Feet patter on the earth, dust rises and still on they fly, but oh, why the sudden silence? Why the bated breath? Why the stifled moans of all this vast multitude? Not a stir for a brief moment, for there in the track, directly in the path of the oncoming rush of horses toddles a little youngster, barely able to walk alone, all unmindful of its peril, taking its own time to cross the track.

Billy sees, recognizes the danger, and with a leap is down and over the fence, into the middle of the course, and lowering those magnificent horns, hooks the clothes of the baby, and, never stopping to turn to retreat, dashes on across, just in time to escape the onrush of the racers as they round the bend.

What shouts! What hurrahs! The crowd goes wild in its frenzied admiration. Losing all fear of such an animal, Billy is grasped by three sturdy men, baby is lifted safely up and tenderly placed in the outstretched arms of the mother, and then Billy is

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

borne high on the shoulders of the men, a conquering hero. Of course he struggles—what goat wouldn't?—and yet finds himself powerless, for his feet are held by men who grip him with hands of iron and with an immense following, they carry him around to the grand-



stand and then over to the platform where the judges sit. Up the steps they go, and there, with thousands and thousands of witnesses, the master of ceremonies decks Billy out with a blue ribbon bow, and again shouts of admiration fairly rend the heavens.

No more racing to-day. Interest in fleet horses has suddenly died, and through the megaphone come these words:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You have just witnessed the brave act of a dumb animal. A goat has done what no man had brains to conceive nor daring to

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

put into execution. Ladies and gentlemen, the races are called off, and, in honor of the goat hero of the day, there will be given on the race course a grand parade of all the animals exhibited at the Fair. You are requested to keep your seats and witness the grand finale of the Licking County Annual Fair.

A buzz of excitement followed this change of program, and necks were craned and all were agog.

In a very few minutes their consuming curiosity was satisfied for there was a long line of animals parading the circle, and at their head was no other than Billy Whiskers, proud of his position, but still prouder that at last his animal friends were receiving the recognition they merited.

As the crowd recognized the leader of the procession, three mighty cheers went up, and when Billy bowed his thanks for this overture—just as he had done countless times during a Circus performance—the people went wild, and hurrah after hurrah greeted him.

Not the least bit disconcerted, Billy marched the length of the track, and had drawn up in front of the grandstand, lining up his motley following, each with an attendant close at his head, for a final flourish, when a little fellow standing near the grandstand shouted:

“It’s Billy! It’s my Billy!” and escaping from his father’s

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

arms, ran pell-mell to him, threw his arms around his neck, and then Billy underwent such a petting as never goat had before.

"Now you won't think such bad things of my Billy, will you, mama," Dick petitioned, as his mother hurried up. "See, isn't it a pretty bow he won?"

"Well, well," conceded Mrs. Treat, reluctantly, "he may be all right, after all."

"I think we've all had excitement enough for this Fair time. Suppose we escape all of the palavering that will surely be lavished on us, and start for home," proposed Mr. Treat.

"All right," agreed the boys, "and we'll take Billy right along. We don't want him to give us the slip. He's too valuable a goat to lose, and we must take great care of him."

Slowly they made their way to the automobile, for however much they might wish to slip quietly away, the crowds thought differently,



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

and pressed about closely, everyone eager to get a glimpse of this very wonderful goat.

"I'll pay you a thousand dollars for him," offered a fakir, the proprietor of one of the side shows on the midway. "He'd do a dandy act I have in mind.

A thousand dollars, I say. Take it?" he questioned.

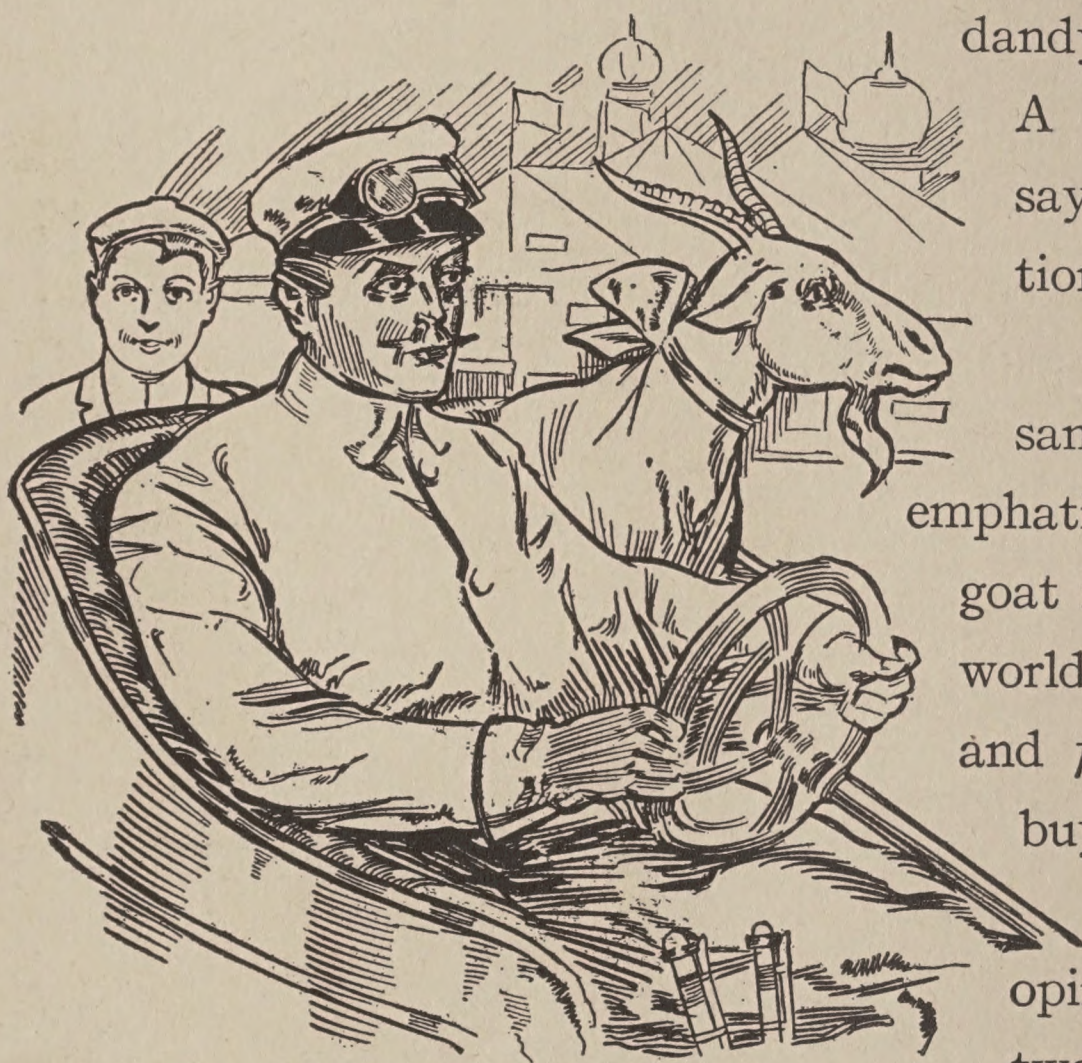
"No, nor two thousand," answered Tom emphatically. "Why, this goat is the best goat in the world, I'd have you know, and *five* thousand couldn't buy him to-day."

"Changed your opinion about me since two days ago," thought

Billy, remembering this same boy's wish that they might rid themselves of his goatship upon the arrival of the automobile.

"Hurry along, boys," urged their father. "Let's get home before the crowd kidnaps him."

"Or goatnaps him, papa."



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Where shall we put him?" uneasily asked Mrs. Treat.

"Why, that's the easiest thing of all. Where but on the front seat?" answered Harry, unhesitatingly. "That's the honor place, you know, and Billy Whiskers is the honor goat of Licking County to-day."

And this is how it came that Billy really kept his promise to old Brownny, and rode back to Cloverleaf Farm in state, occupying the front seat, while the boys, Tom, Dick and Harry, were crowded into the tonneau with their mother.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REWARD

THE next morning things at Cloverleaf Farm had settled back into their accustomed groove. Breakfast was over by half past six, and soon after a wagon arrived bringing home the Duke, more vain than ever since his beauty had been publicly recognized, and Toppy, still somewhat ruffled owing to the long chase she had led her keepers the day previous ere she had been captured and returned to the coop she had deserted with Billy Whiskers' aid.

The boys had marched off to school, each swinging his lunch basket, and each wishing that lessons were half as interesting as the Fair.



Billy Whiskers at the Fair.

That evening the postmaster was sitting on the same cracker barrel he had occupied two days before, and, beaming with good nature, hailed the Treat trio as they were passing on their way home from school.

"A letter in here for your father!" he called genially.

"Where from?" asked Tom shortly, with but a show of slight interest.

"Springfield, I guess. The postmark is blurred, and so I can't be real sure."

"You go after it, Harry," commanded the eldest of the three.

"Won't either!"

"Then you go, Dick," turning to the little fellow when he found Harry incorrigible.

"Guess not!" sturdily, hands in trouser pockets, and feet kicking the deep dust of the roadway. "Papa says *you're* to bring the mail, so get it yourself," and on he marched.

"Not so anxious now your automobile has come," said the postmaster as Tom reluctantly entered.

Hurrying out without waiting to reply, he soon overtook his brothers, and after examining the envelope, stuffed it in his hip pocket. It likely would have been there yet had not Dick thought it wise to settle the responsibility of delivering the family mail in the future.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Say, papa," he began at the supper table that evening, "it's Tom's place to stop at the post office, isn't it?"

Tom frowned at Harry, thinking that he had prompted Dick to put the question. Harry frowned back, and even gave his brother a pinch under cover of the table.

"Boys, boys!" reproved Mr. Treat, "what's the trouble now?"

"Nothin'," answered Tom. "Only I asked Harry to get the letter Mr. Harris had for you, and he wouldn't, and Dick was stubborn, too."

"Now, Tom, you know that is your duty. I want my eldest son to bring the mail. The younger boys might lose it. Even you, big as you are, seem likely to prove careless, for you have not delivered any letter to me as yet."

"Oh, father, I forgot!" and a hot flush of shame at his negligence mounted Tom's cheeks, as he hastily produced the missive.

"Of all things! Mother, listen to this," for as Mr. Treat tore open the envelope out had dropped a pink slip of paper beside a note.

"Dear Sir:—

I'm a comparatively poor man, but not so poor in gratitude that I cannot voice my thanks for the rescue of my baby son at the Fair yesterday. That the rescuer happened to be a goat is no reason why the act should go unrewarded, and the enclosed check is the ef-

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

fort I make to express my appreciation of the brave act. I send it in the hope that it may provide some luxury for those who have trained him so well.

Sincerely,

J. B. MARTIN."

"How much is it?" gasped Mrs. Treat.

"Fifty dollars, as I live!"

"Of course we cannot accept it?" half questioned his wife.

"I don't know," argued Mr. Treat. "I am sure if my baby had been in such peril, I should not like to have his rescuer return the thank-offering I made—the only way a man has to show his appreciation and lasting gratitude, as Mr. Martin says."

"Let's keep it to go to the Fair next year. Think what a lot of candy we can have!" suggested Harry eagerly.

"Well, boys, I think we will keep it, but it will go in the bank to be added to the fund Billy has already started for your college educations," decided Mr. Treat, carefully folding the check and placing it in his pocket-book.

That night after their mother had tucked the covers about them and put out the light, Tom snuggled over close to Harry, and whispered:

"Harry, I've thought of a plan!"

"What about?"

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"I've been thinking a goat is a pretty good thing—better'n a calf. The Duke has never earned any money, but Billy has a lot. Suppose we sell the Duke."

"Not by a long way!" said Harry, scorning the proposal.

"But, Harry, listen to common sense! You know Billy earned a lot this summer. We'd not have the auto if it wasn't for him. And now here is another fifty dollars come to-day. If one goat can do that, why not get more—one for each of us boys, any way?"

"But the Duke? Why sell him?"

"I must say you are slow," responded Tom impatiently. "We'll have to have some money to buy the goats, won't we?"

"Yes, but I don't want to lose the Duke. Say, why not take the money in our banks down stairs and buy some kids? They'd not cost so much as full-grown goats, and they would soon grow."

"Bully for you!" said Tom, pounding Harry vigorously on the back to express his appreciation of the valuable suggestion. "We'll do it to-morrow."

The next day being Saturday and a holiday, the boys proceeded to put their plan into immediate execution. Counting their hoard, they found it totalled six dollars and three cents. "Let's not wait till afternoon, but go down to the Corners now. Mr. Finnegan has two kids and perhaps he'll sell one to us," whispered Harry as they bent over their task of counting the heap of pennies.

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"All right, come along," and snatching caps, they ran to the kitchen and told their mother they were going to the Corners on "important business."

Mrs. Treat was one of those wise mothers who have the full confidence of her sons, and she never pried into their secrets, for she knew full well they would tell her all about them in good time.

"All right, boys, but hurry back. It is getting along towards noon."

Reaching Mr. Finnegan's home, the boys went to the rear, and were delighted to have him answer their knock in person.

"Good morning, and what brings you here?" he asked.

"We've come to ask if you want to sell one of your goats," said Tom.

"Well, now, that all depends on how much the buyer will pay. You see, my kids are very fine ones."

"Yes, we've often seen them in the yard, and they look as good as our own Billy," agreed Harry readily.

"How much is one worth?" asked Tom, bristling with business.

"Suppose we go out to see them," replied Mr. Finnegan, leading the way to a small shed at the back of the lot. "I've said I'd not sell them for less than ten dollars, but seeing it's you boys, and your father is a friend of mine, I'll say five."

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"Oh, dear, and we wanted two, one for each of us!" lamented Harry.

"You do? And how much money have you?"

"Six dollars and three cents, and we need ten!"

"Seeing what a very good friend your father is, I'll let you have them for that," said the owner of the kids.

"What?" they chorussed, their eyes dancing at the proposal.

"Just right! six dollars and three cents and you own two kids."

"Aren't they fine?" said Harry, eyeing the kids with supreme satisfaction. "Count out the money, Tom, and we'll take them home with us."

Two happier boys never turned into the Treat drive than Tom and Harry that Saturday noon.

Mr. Treat had come in from the fields, and Mrs. Treat was fretting because her sons were not on hand ready for dinner, and went to the front veranda to watch for their appearing.



Billy Whiskers at the Fair

"I want to know what those boys are up to now. Father, come out here this minute. Is it *goats* those lads are carrying?"

"Looks like it to me," returned her husband with a silent chuckle.

"As if I haven't had enough bother with Billy Whiskers!"

"Come in here, Tom," called Mr. Treat, as the boys were making for the stables. "What's this?"

"Why, they're our new kids! Bought them from Mr. Finnegan. Billy's been such a good investment, and three will earn just three times as much. We've one apiece now, and you needn't worry any more about our educations."

"Boys!" gasped their mother, throwing up her hands in amazement.

"Never mind, mother! This is their first business venture, and we must see what they make of it."

"But—but, father, you can't realize what it means. **THREE** goats!"

"There, there, don't fret! Billy Whiskers will likely take good care of them. Let the boys have a chance."

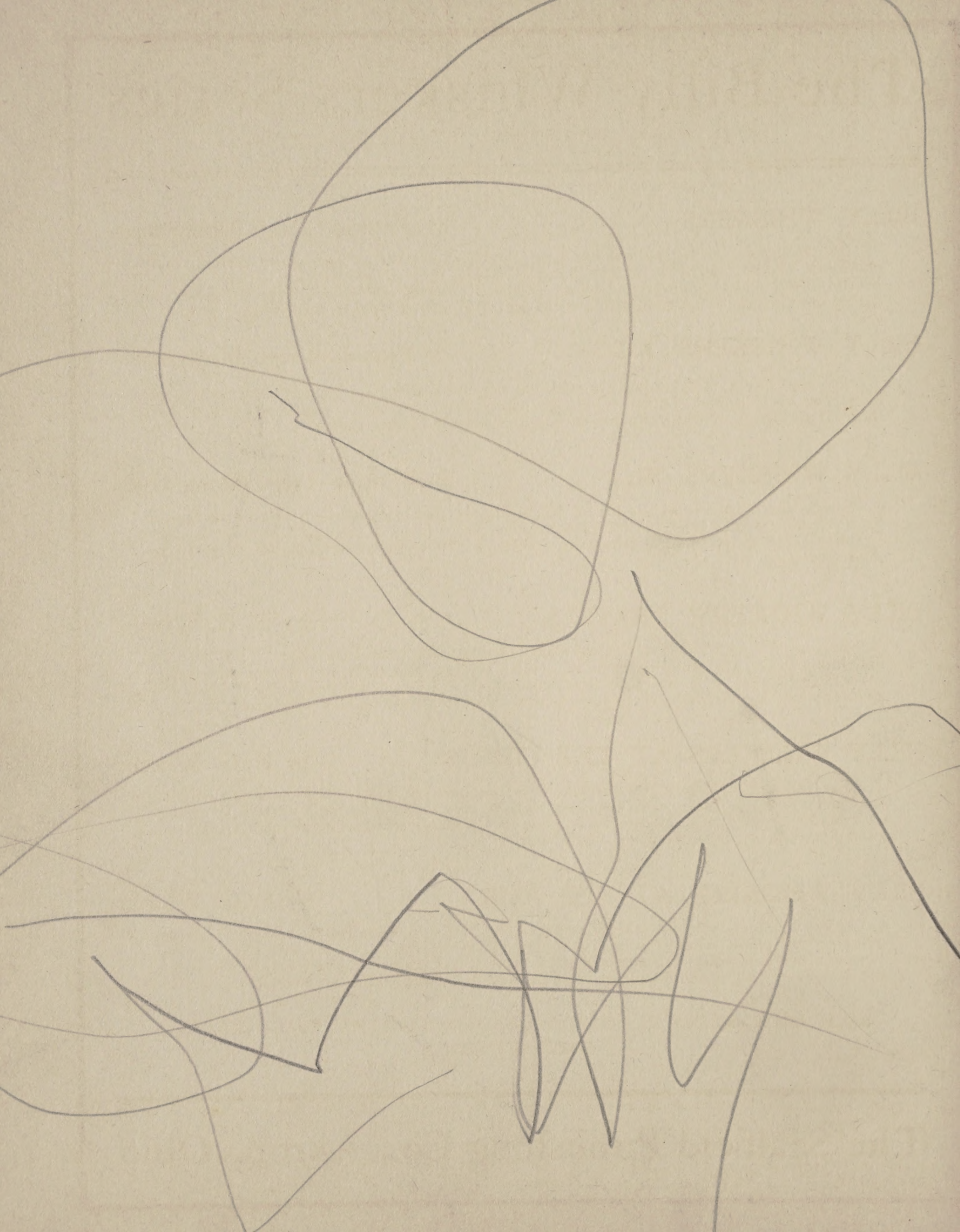
When Mr. Treat allied himself with his sons in this way, their mother usually yielded, and so it happened that Tom and Harry led their purchases to the barn for safe keeping, and Billy introduced the kids as his "twins" to all the barnyard inhabitants. The title clung to them, for they were as like as two peas, and as

Billy Whiskers at the Fair

long as they lived at Cloverleaf Farm they were known far and wide as the "twins." Years afterwards, when Billy Whiskers was old and feeble, the children of the twins, and his grandchildren by adoption, would clamor for a story, and Billy would relate his adventures at the Fair just as you have read them, and would end by saying:

"But those experiences do not compare with the good times I had with the twins at Chautauqua the next summer,—not nearly. However, that for me to tell to-sides, it is re-book written W h i s k e r s' is too long a tale day, and be-counted in the about us, "Billy Twins."





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